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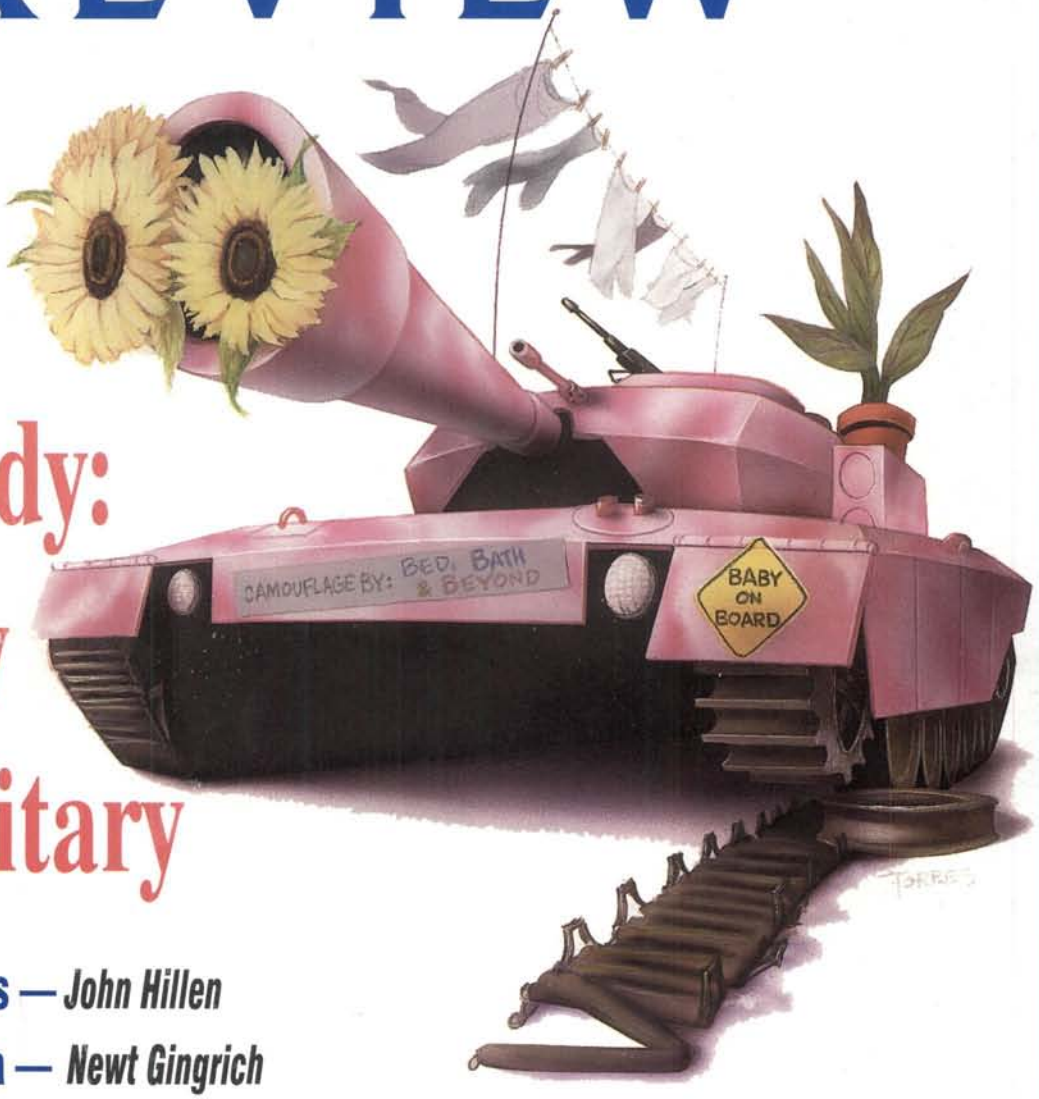
LINTONISM—
The Editors

Ponnuru: The Never-Ending Dole Campaign

NATIONAL REVIEW

Neither Rough Nor Ready: The New U.S. Military



Hollow to the Corps — *John Hillen*

Re-Arming America — *Newt Gingrich*

Lt. Kelly Flinn, Cosmo Girl — *Florence King*

The Military as Nanny — *Allan Carlson* • **The Pentagon's Choirboy** — *Bill Gertz*

PLUS: *David Klinghoffer* on Toni Morrison • *Richard Broc*
R. W. Johnson on South Africa's Descent • *Eric Peters* on th

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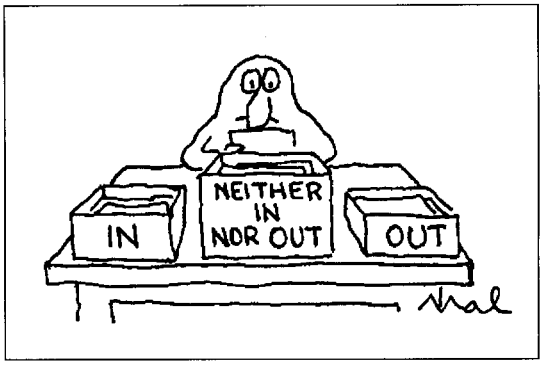

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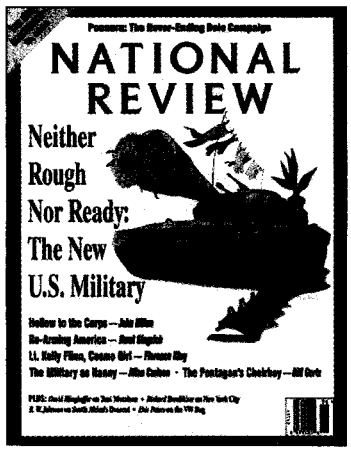

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LETTERS

American Debates

Although Scott McConnell accurately describes the political, economic, and ideological features of Hispanic de-assimilation ["Americans No More?" Dec. 31], he misses one very salient point—corporate America's complicity in this whole mess. A case in point is Disney, which puts on a Spanish version of its "World on Ice" show, not only in California, but throughout the United States. Or take a talking *Sesame Street* doll that my son received as a Christmas present, complete with exuberant directions to "Squeeze Ernie's left hand and hear him speak Spanish!" He also speaks English, if you squeeze his right hand, making him bilingual. This politically correct monstrosity is manufactured by Tyco, a subsidiary of Mattel. Or lastly, my trusty automated teller machine, tied into the Bank of America, which invariably gives me the choice of conducting my transaction in English, Spanish, or Korean.

Mark Nedelman
Irvine, Calif.

Mr. McConnell's fear of the great unassimilated brown masses evidently impeded him from talking to too many Mexican-Americans—or Californians, for that matter. Did the editors not notice that all three of his "experts" on Latinos and Los Angeles were New Yorkers? And the Latinos he does cite are all profoundly irrelevant to the contemporary cultural and political climate of Southern California. Resorting to Sixties political groups, the Brown Berets and La Raza Unida, to explain today's Latinos is tantamount to interviewing the Weathermen and the Chicago 7 to understand present-day whites.

Gregory Rodriguez
Pepperdine Institute for Public Policy
Los Angeles, Calif.

Good Catholics

Richard Grenier ["Fascism à la Française," Dec. 8] correctly deplores the collaboration of some Frenchmen with the Nazis. He errs, however, about the number of Jews deported and about the "silence" of the Catholic Church. Grenier says that 774,721 Jews were deported. Holocaust historian Lucy Dawidowicz says in *The War against the Jews* that of 350,000 Jews in France at the outset of the Final Solution, 90,000 were killed. As to Catholic "silence," the French hierarchy issued pastoral letters directing all Catholics to help Jews, and forbidding them to betray hidden ones. According to Leon Poliakov, another Holocaust historian, this was in obedience to Vatican instructions. Grenier mentions Cardinal Baudrillart, "an ardent Nazi supporter," as if he were typical. In fact he was in flagrant disobedience to Rome and the French hierarchy.

Grenier says the "civil servants . . . obediently carried out Nazi orders." Yet Nazi documents captured by the Allies include complaints from Nazi officials all over France about the non-cooperation or outright interference of local officials. No doubt many French civil servants were as far from being obedient Catholics as were the intellectuals Grenier mentions. Clearly, however, many risked their lives to rescue Jews, and these are not isolated bright spots. The Pères de Notre Dame de Sion and the Capuchins organized extensive rescue networks and document-forging operations. In 1943, the Vichy government arrested 120 priests who sheltered Jews, and 400 police who refused to round up Jews. The Church's enemies are trying to undermine her authority by falsifying her record, especially Pius XII's. *NR* should resist.

Elizabeth Altham
Hamden, Conn.

Ticket to Disaster

E. V. Kontorovich's brilliant dissection of the Yale Five ["God and Man . . . at Yale," Dec. 31] reveals why imitating Left-agitprop rhetoric and tactics would be a recipe for conservative defeat, in or out of court. As I'd suspected all along, Elisha Dov Hack, the lead complainant, is a perfect caricature—humorless, self-righteous, censorious, and enraged that someone else might be having a good time. Right or Left, identity politics remains a ticket to disaster.

Carl F. Horowitz
Ashburn, Va.

No Liberalism Here

John Simon's review of *Amistad* ["Souls at Sea," Dec. 31] is at best an exercise in pettifoggery. It is incomprehensible to me that he could have the impression that the movie was "poster art for . . . knee-jerk liberals." In the film's climax, John Quincy Adams appeals to tradition—specifically the tradition represented by Madison, Jefferson, Washington, and John Adams—in a manner that would almost make Edmund Burke blush. Also, note the favorable treatment of Christianity, and the fact that we are shown Cinque being captured by one of his own people.

Gil Scott
Grandville, Mich.

Smile with Kyl

Congratulations to Matthew Scully on his excellent piece on the many accomplishments of Sen. Jon Kyl ["The Quiet Conservative," Dec. 31]. However, one important leadership role was not mentioned: Sen. Kyl's championship of the repeal of perhaps the most unfair and cruelest tax of all—the estate (or "death") tax. Ever since he came to the Senate he has pushed for repeal. He started with only one cosponsor and has now inched up to 31, on his way to a majority of 51. Sen. Kyl believes no family should have to face the undertaker and the IRS in the same week.

James L. Martin
President, The 60 Plus Association
Arlington, Va.

Feminism Lives

Don't be too quick to sound a death knell for feminism ["The Week," Dec. 31]. Among the traditional ways to denounce an enemy is that of turning his name into an epithet. Witness the use of the word "conservative" by some members of the media. Those women who no longer wish to be identified as feminists have merely donned camouflage so that they may fight a more effective guerrilla battle.

Anne M. Golonka
President, S. Nevada NOW
Las Vegas, Nev.

Ode to Moldova

John Bloom's "You Are in Moldova" [Dec. 31] was an insult to the great people of Moldova. For three years, I have traveled to Moldova to promote democracy, and I have seen the positive energy of free enterprise, the many brilliant and caring citizens working in and out of government, seniors dancing in the park, the rolling hills and quaint villages of the countryside, and the hospitality of the average Moldovan. I am not claiming that what Mr. Bloom states is untrue. But it appears he looked only for the darkest elements of Moldovan society.

Paul DeGregorio
University of Missouri–St. Louis
St. Louis, Mo.

Correction

An error had crept into our usually trusty stylebook, and thence into Norman Podhoretz's essay in our January 26 issue. Mr. Podhoretz had spelled Allen Ginsberg's name correctly, thus. —LB

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At last count, the world didn't have any continents to spare.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Testing Bias

ON consecutive days in late 1990, two young black men went to the office of a small Washington, D.C., employment agency, BMC Marketing Corp. The two were unexceptionable, except for their insistent manner—and the fact that they would soon sue BMC for discrimination.

It turned out the pair weren't real job applicants at all, but "testers" from the Washington "Fair Employment Council." Each had been paired with a white "tester" and given supposedly identical fictitious credentials. When their white partners got referrals and they didn't, they sued—even though they had no actual interest in a job, had lied about their qualifications, and could base their claim of discrimination on a sample size of two.

In 1994, a federal court tossed out their claims. But other firms can't count on having BMC's luck. BMC had pro-bono legal help (from the Center for Individual Rights). And its experience with testers came before the 1991 Civil Rights Act tilted the ground in such cases toward plaintiffs (thank you, George Bush).

Most small firms don't have the wherewithal to fight these suits, and so they end up settling—no matter what the merits. Then the anti-discrimination groups use their winnings to target the next firm. "It's a total shell game," says Michael Greve of the Center for Individual Rights.

Which is why "fair"-housing and -employment groups love testers, and why the Clinton Administration is embracing them itself. Testers aren't so much discrimination cops as discrimination spies, agents of deceit with an interest in entrapping firms in allegedly discriminatory conduct.

Until recently, tester suits have been limited to the area of housing. Under the Fair Housing Act, testers have had "standing" to sue. In employment cases, they have not (usually you must suffer some real injury to have "standing"). BMC won its case precisely on this issue.

But the area of employment is just too good for anti-discrimination groups—or the government—to pass up. Since 1990, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has contended that employment testers do have standing to sue. It got a boost from the 1991 Civil Rights Act, bolstered its argument in 1996, and is now ready to cross the line from endorsing to deploying testers.

In December, the EEOC announced a $200,000 pilot program with two groups, in Chicago and Washington, D.C., to fund employment testers (the Department of Labor has been up to something similar). As former EEOC general counsel Don Livingston says of the new policy, "It raises the question of whether we want our government to be engaging in fraudulent misrepresentation."

That never stopped any government program before, of course. What's most rotten about tester programs is their premise: that beneath it all everyone is racist, and it only takes some snooping by the enlightened to find us out. In the words of outgoing EEOC Chairman Gilbert F. Casellas: "Interviewers may also be unaware that they may judge some people more harshly because of their race, gender, ethnicity, disability . . ."

If lying is justified to uncover this subconscious stain, then so is anything else. Some housing groups have been known to place allegedly biased housing ads in newspapers, then turn around and sue the papers for running them. Crazy? Maybe, but it's par for the course. Back in the BMC case, one of the Fair Employment Council's claims was that it should be able to sue to win back the resources it expended trying to bust BMC in the first place (the court agreed, if on slightly different grounds).

This is the logic—circular, absurd, unavoidable—that is so familiar in all matters pertaining to racism today. It's our small, very watered-down version of the officially sanctioned hysteria of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, when it comes to race in present-day America, the time is Mao. —RICHARD LOWRY

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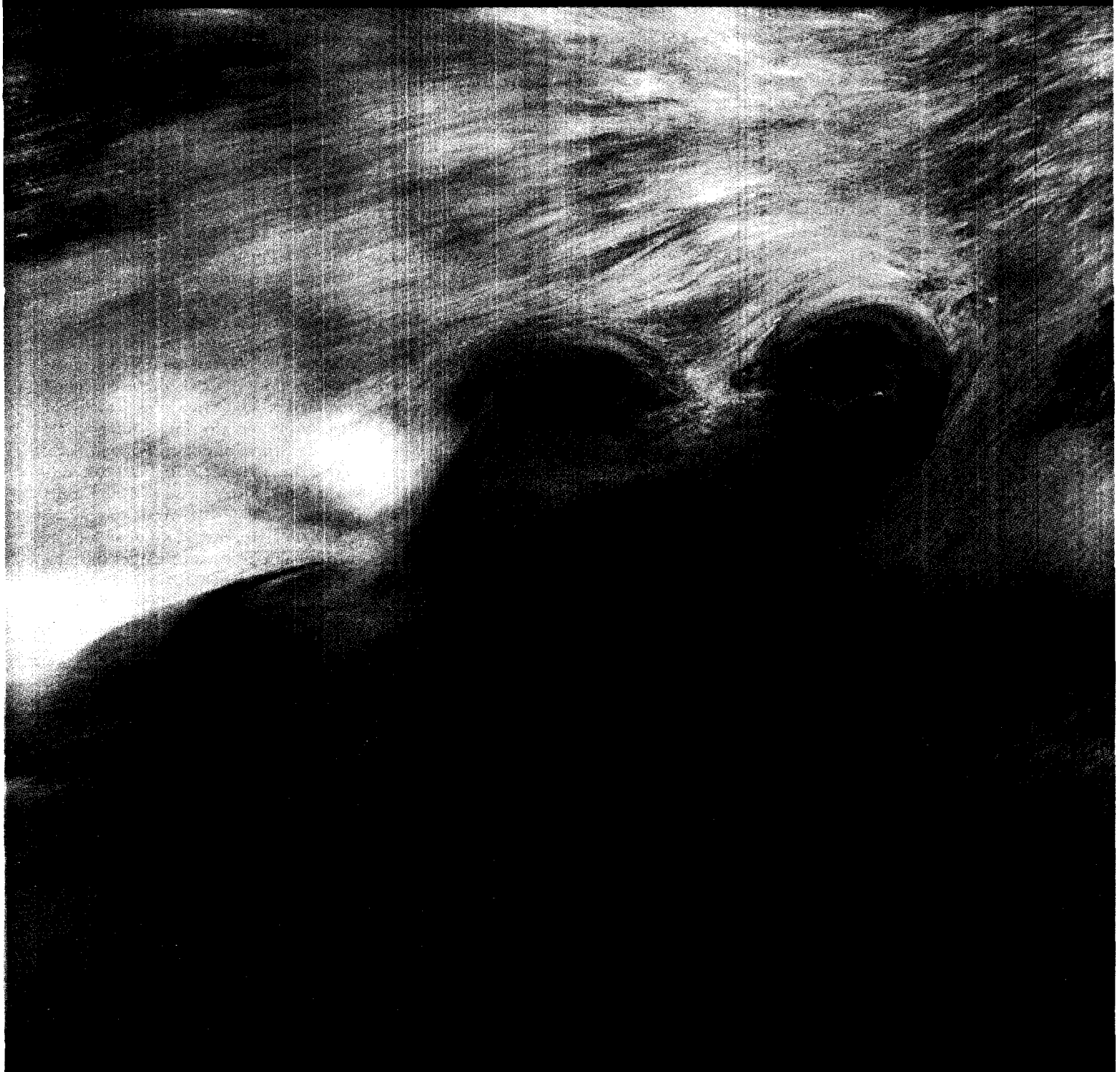

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FOR THE RECORD

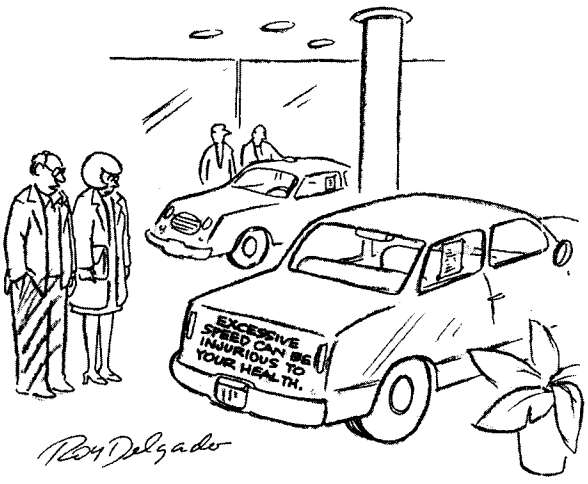
■ Pro-lifers split by proposal, defeated at Republican National Committee winter meeting in Indian Wells, Calif., to deny GOP funds to pols who would keep partial-birth abortion legal. In favor of proposal: **Paul Weyrich**, **Gary Bauer**, **Steve Forbes**, **George Will**, Gov. **Frank Keating** (Okla.), Sen. **John Ashcroft** (Mo.). Against it: RNC Chairman **Jim Nicholson**, Gov. **George W. Bush** (Tex.), Sen. **John McCain** (Ariz.), Rep. **John Kasich** (Ohio), Rep. **Henry Hyde** (Ill.), Rep. **Charles Canady** (Fla.), **Vin Weber**, *Wall St. Journal*. . . . Gov. Bush recently discussed Social Security privatization at Cato Institute with Pres. **Ed Crane** and Social Security expert **José Piñera**. "[Bush] thought it was a terrific idea, the most important domestic economic issue," says Crane. "But then he lamented the fact that it's the third rail of politics and he can't talk about it. . . . He reminds me a lot of his dad." . . . In N.H., Forbes and **Lamar Alexander** call for constitutional amendment after property-tax-based school-funding system was struck down by State Supreme Court as inequitable. . . . Chicago mayor **Richard Daley** endorses **Al Gore** for President 26 months before Illinois's 2000 primary, although he has not endorsed gubernatorial candidate for primary two months hence.

■ Updates from last issue (Jan. 26): After **Lawrence Kudlow** and **Stephen Moore** proposed to expand 15 per cent income-tax bracket upward ("Raise the Roof"), Sen. **Paul Coverdell** (R., Ga.) introduced bill to do it. Is **Clinton** child-care initiative a sop to unions, as **Stephen Silbiger** argued ("State of the Unions")? Treasury Secretary **Robert Rubin** appointed AFL-CIO head **John Sweeney** to working group on child care. . . . Staffer for Rep. **Steve Buyer** (R., Ind.), last seen helping preserve racial preferences, says Buyer wants people with "warrior experience" and "open-minded people who are not coming here representing a set agenda" for commission on women in military—a thinly veiled attempt to exclude conservative **Anita Blair** of Independent Women's Forum. . . . Association of state environmental agencies holds conference on implementing Kyoto global-warming accords—although U.S. Senate has not ratified them. . . . Nike buys full-page ad in gay-activist *Human Rights Campaign Quarterly*: "It's not the shoes you wear, it's the stand you take."

■ In interview with *Progressive*, Harvard celebrity **Henry Louis Gates Jr.** explains why "affirmative action" is "under such an onslaught from **Newt** and Company": "It's like they were hibernating for a few decades, and . . . they walked into a room, and they go, 'God, how'd these women get in here, how'd these black people get in here?' " . . . A victim class is born: In *The Nation*, Brandeis research associate **Margaret Morganroth Gullette** uncovers "middle-ageism" (discrimination against Boomers), concludes that " 'middle age' as we know it is not an innocent fact of life. It is an ideological construct." . . . Also in *The Nation*, former director of Institute for Policy Studies (**Salvador Allende**'s old pals) notes that contrary to complaints of fellow leftists, "Foundations that support progressive causes actually have lots of money, *more* than their conservative counterparts. The real problem . . . is that too much of this money is spent foolishly" on single-issue groups.

■ Arab sources say Gen. **Talib al-Sadoun**, one of Iraq's most popular and senior military figures, has been secretly executed, presumably for plotting against **Saddam Hussein**. . . . Singapore will build port to accommodate U.S. aircraft carriers, warships. In shift, Deputy PM **Tony Tan** calls U.S. forces "positive influence for regional peace and stability." . . . French Pres. **Jacques Chirac** apologizes to descendants of Capt. **Alfred Dreyfus** and his defender **Emile Zola** on hundredth anniversary of latter's *J'accuse*. Right-wing deputies walk out of Parliament when Socialist PM **Lionel Jospin** claims Right played no part in abolishing slavery and denounces comparison of Nazism and Communism. . . . **Natan Sharansky**, most famous of Soviet Jewish refuseniks and free-market advocate, joins Israeli PM **Benjamin Netanyahu**'s inner circle after departure of dovish Foreign Sec'y **David Levy**. . . . Columbia Prof. **Edward Said**, bitter critic of Israel, calls for binational Jewish–Arab state. . . . Chancellor **Helmut Kohl** abandons as unattainable Germany's target of halving unemployment—now 20 per cent in old East Germany—by 2000. Four German economists file suit against legality of European monetary integration. . . . Britain's Foreign Sec'y **Robin Cook** says European Union, during six-month British presidency, will side with French oil companies against U.S. in Iran sanctions feud. . . . Italian-born **Sonia Gandhi** enters Indian politics near spot where husband, PM **Rajiv Gandhi**, was assassinated in 1991. . . . **Mao Tse-tung**'s tomb in Peking reopens after nine-month closing, apparently to take care of rotting corpse.

■ Seeking divorce, **Roseanne** claims third husband is crazy. Go figure. . . . Comedian **Will Durst** in *Progressive*: "Can you imagine trying to introduce sugar in today's climate? . . . 'I got this flaky white powder, and it produces a real wiry high. . . . And the crash is . . . hard. But here's the kicker: We market it straight at kids. Start them out on it first thing in the morning. Cover their cereal in it at the factory.' The FDA would tow your butt to sea."



"I knew once they got to cigarettes that it was only a matter of time."

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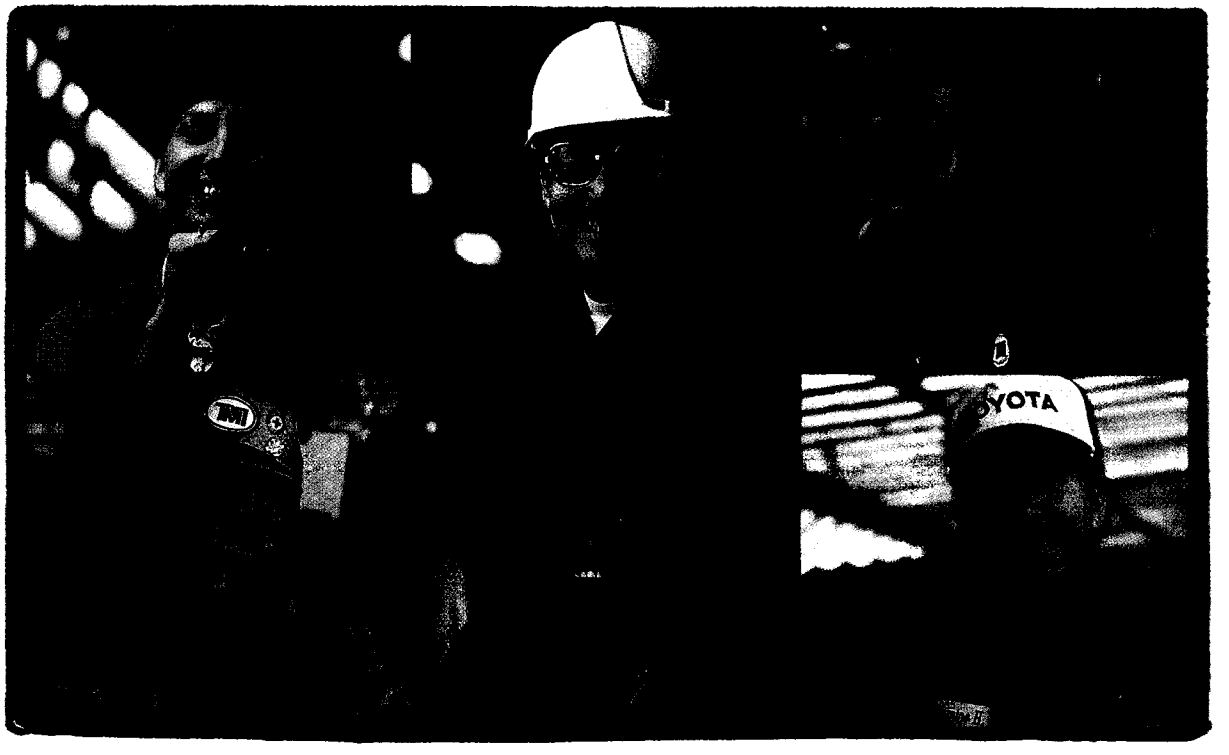

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THE WEEK

■ At age 77, John Glenn will be shot into space. Can we send the Rolling Stones next?

■ Social scientist James Q. Wilson writes, of the Unabomber's manifesto, that "if it is the work of a madman, then the writings of many political philosophers—Jean Jacques Rousseau, Tom Paine, Karl Marx—are scarcely more sane." Sometimes James Q. Wilson writes even better than he knows.

■ President Clinton was finally deposed under oath in the Paula Corbin Jones case, scheduled for trial in late May. It has been reported that Mr. Clinton did not dispute that his former bodyguard may have brought Miss Corbin to the Arkansas hotel room, but the President continued to insist that he had no memory of ever meeting her. If the case goes to trial, he risks perjury if other witnesses credibly contradict his sworn testimony. For her part, Mrs. Jones risks losing her case even if she proves the facts as alleged because her civil-rights claim is legally shaky. Hence both parties have strong incentives to settle. The money could easily be raised with some bi-partisan cooperation, as William F. Buckley Jr. has pointed out in his column. The sticking point seems to be Mrs. Jones's insistence on an explicit presidential apology. Memo to Paula Jones: A large cash settlement *is* an apology. Take the money and run.

■ "Public Still Backs Abortion, but Wants Limits, Poll Says: A Notable Shift from General Acceptance." Notable indeed if the *New York Times* notices it. But the *Times* is right: public opinion *has* been moving in a pro-life direction, especially since partial-birth abortions became an issue two years ago. Furthermore, 50 per cent of Democrats polled thought their party should oppose or take no stand on legal abortion. Instead of digesting these data, however, the press focused on the failed effort within the Republican National Committee to block funds from going to candidates who back partial-birth abortion. Strategically, it was the wrong fight to pick. Some pro-lifers argue that such considerations are inconsistent with moral principle. Most, however (e.g., Rep. Henry Hyde), understand that principle is ill-served by self-defeating gestures. Republican leaders who want to avoid similar fiascos in the future must cure themselves of the laryngitis that afflicts them whenever the subject of abortion comes up. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott could make a start in his response to the State of the Union address.

■ Aside from some brief mentions during Bob Dole's 1996 campaign, Republicans in the Nineties seem to have abandoned the idea of cutting tax rates—the popular centerpiece of their domestic agenda in the Eighties. Therefore presidential aspirant Sen. John Ashcroft (R., Mo.) deserves credit for reviving it. Under his plan, Americans would be taxed at 10, 20, 30, or 39.6 per cent of their income, instead of the current 15, 28, 36, and 39.6. Other features of the plan include making payroll taxes deductible, loosening restrictions on IRAs, cutting capital-gains taxes, and eliminating the estate and alternative-minimum taxes. Supply-siders wish Sen. Ashcroft's plan would also reduce the number of tax brackets or lower the top rate (raised by President Clinton in 1993), proposals he excluded in order to avoid charges of favoring the rich. But the larger significance of the plan is not legislative but political. Social conservatives, represented by the likes of Paul Weyrich and Phyllis Schlafly, form Ashcroft's national base; as first reported on *NR*'s website, the two most influential Christian conservatives, James Dobson and Pat Robertson, may soon throw their support to him. The tax plan shows that he is reaching out to economic conservatives, even as Steve Forbes has been courting social conservatives. Today's conservative presidential aspirants are trying methodically to reconstruct the Reagan coalition of economic and social conservatives—in happy contrast to 1996.

■ Abner Louima, the Haitian immigrant whose account of cops beating and torturing him inflamed New York City last August, has retracted one sensational element of it. The police, he now says, did *not* say, "This is Giuliani time," as they worked him over. According to the *Village Voice*, Mr. Louima's advisors told him to embroider his story "to get the message" out. Looks as if it's still hype time, whoever is mayor of Gotham City.

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■ Readers have been asking for the solution to the December 31 Trans-O-Gram. Herewith:

ST. MATTHEW: *Adoration of the Magi*: "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

■ Despite overwhelming evidence that Theodore Kaczynski's mail bombs killed 3 people and injured 29 others, the country has been treated to a byzantine jury-selection process, insanity defenses and psychiatrists, an undisciplined judge, and public plea-bargaining, all against a backdrop of commentary treating the trial as a "debate" between competing world views. Some form of a plea-bargain now appears imminent. Such agreements are defended, by those who defend them, as a means of enabling the justice system to function in overburdened urban courtrooms. How then does Mr. Kaczynski have the leverage to negotiate a plea with federal prosecutors—how, apart from the fact that he would be capable of dragging out the present spectacle for several more months? Anything short of the death penalty for this man would be an inadequate response to his crimes, and a guarantee that he would remain a participant in the national "debate" for years to come.

■ At the time of Alexis Herman's confirmation hearings, Republicans thought, all things considered, that it would be better to have a "weak" Secretary of Labor, and so they gave her a pass. They ignored allegations of self-dealing when she was at the Labor Department during the Carter years, her race-hustling career in the private sector since then, and, more recently, her proximity to the Clinton Administration's finance scandals. The real reason Miss Herman had such an easy time, of course, is that most Republicans would rather walk on hot coals than criticize a black woman. Now, Secretary Herman is under Justice Department investigation for alleged influence peddling at the White House back in 1994. All the better—now she will be a *really* weak Labor Secretary.

■ Speaking of race hustling . . . When comedian Chris Rock interviewed Jesse Jackson on his HBO show, he asked the "civil-rights leader," What do you *do*? Well, Jackson recently gave a demonstration of what he does: he went to Wall Street and he jawboned "the capitol of capital" to hire more minorities; he succeeded in cajoling some $400,000—so far—from Wall Street firms to support his effort. Jackson has become expert at this maneuver, a high-profile campaign that forces corporate America to ante up for his various organizations. So, Jackson does what Wall Street does: raise money.

■ CONSPIRACY UPDATE: The latest theory out there is that the late Ron Brown, who died when his plane crashed in Croatia, had a bullet wound in his head. Journalist Christopher Ruddy, of Vince Foster fame, and a host of prominent blacks, from Dick Gregory to Alan Keyes, want the matter investigated. Would some historical perspective help the afflicted? In 1806, former Vice President Aaron Burr took a boatload of armed men down the Mississippi River, hoping to invade Spanish Mexico, or pry off the western United States, or both. He had been in touch with disgruntled Federalists who wanted New England to secede from the Union. He was turned in by his co-conspirator, the American governor of the Louisiana Territory, who was on the payroll of the King of Spain. The moral? Conspiracies have happened in American history that were a lot bigger than bumping off Commerce Secretaries. But they never amount to anything. As Bismarck said, God watches out for fools, drunkards, and the United States. Will everyone calm down?

■ In addition to the comprehensive account, found elsewhere in this issue, of the pathetic state of America's military, there is this humdinger, first reported by the *Washington Times*: At the recent Kyoto conference, Al Gore refused to "exempt U.S. military training and overseas operations from fuel cutbacks," the result being that the U.S. will be in violation of the Global Climate Change Treaty unless the UN grants approval for any overseas military actions. Get ready for the fuel-economy replacement for the M-1 Abrams tank.

■ The Cuba that Pope John Paul II is visiting was spruced up, Potemkin-style, and not just in physical appearance. Only a year or so ago, according to Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, Catholic and Protestant leaders suffered evictions, threats, and imprisonment. The Castro regime called believers "social scum." Then last year it allowed the first public Roman Catholic Mass in 36 years, and the first public Christmas celebration. Will the village undo Potemkin? The regime has relied on the Catholic charity Caritas to provide or oversee 75 per cent of all medical aid to the country since 1991. Castro is getting a nice PR boost from the papal visit, but at great risk. The Pontiff's message of hope and freedom is sure to have the same wonderfully subversive impact in Cuba that it had in Poland.

■ The European Union sent a fact-finding mission to Algeria, a nation locked in a horrific struggle against murderous Islamist extremists. More than sixty thousand Algerians have died in the six-year "holy war" waged by the Islamists, yet some Europeans cling to the belief that the Algerian government is (for unfathomable reasons) responsible for some of the massacres. The government is right to be wary of the EU but should welcome the mission: if it takes an honest look at the facts, the result might be more robust European backing for the government's fight. Meanwhile, Turkey's Constitutional Court has outlawed the country's Islamist "Welfare Party" and

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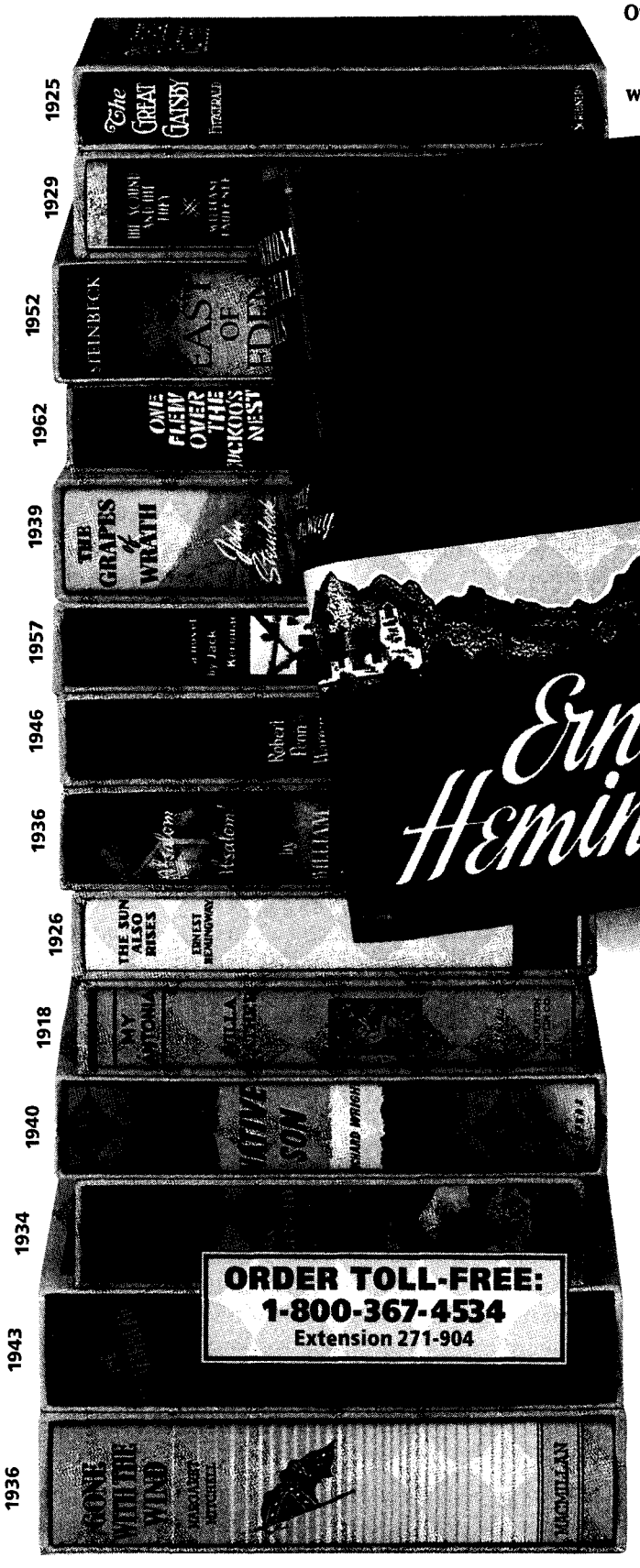

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banned its leaders from politics for five years. This too has elicited criticism in Europe (and from the State Department), though the Welfare Party's attempt to Islamicize the secular bureaucracy and educational system clearly went against the country's tradition, since Ataturk, of separating mosque and state. Turkey's only "crime" lies in its desire to contain the extremist virus before it turns Turkey into another Algeria.

■ *The Economist* has a timely warning for America's foreign-policy establishment, currently drunk on "lonely superpower" hubris. In a survey of the likely balance of power in the twenty-first century, it suggests that there could be no fewer than six superpowers: China, "Islam," Russia, Japan, "Europe," and the United States. America would still be the most powerful country (slightly ahead of China), but it would no longer exercise the unquestionable dominance that it has had since the implosion of the Soviet Union. For that hegemony to continue, the U.S. needs to forge a permanent alliance with its Cold War allies in Europe—"an equal partnership in which Europeans and Americans defend their shared interests outside Europe as well as within it." A few quibbles: populous and well-educated India is surely a more likely superpower than "Islam," if only because the threat from its next-door neighbor, China, will force it to become one. And the more "equal" the Euro-American partnership, the more likely it is to become a rivalry; a better long-term model is NATO, in which the U.S. is plainly *primus inter pares*. Otherwise, the analysis is as sound and farsighted as it was when it appeared, over the years, in *NR*'s pages. And it should be heeded not only by liberal policy-makers, but also by over-confident conservatives who would like the U.S. to engage in global ideological crusades without—and sometimes against—its traditional allies. Globalist isolationism is no more sensible than the pull-up-the-drawbridges kind.

■ The Clinton Administration's hard line toward Iran, one of its better foreign-policy positions, is wavering, because of the Administration's lack of fortitude. It has refused to impose sanctions on European companies investing in Iranian oil and gas, despite the requirements of the D'Amato–Gilman Act. Now it indulges the Russians despite Moscow's even more dangerous aid to Iran's nuclear and missile programs. Nearing passage is important legislation (sponsored by Trent Lott and Joseph Lieberman in the Senate and Benjamin Gilman in the House) to punish foreign entities that give Iran missile know-how (by, for example, barring Russian aerospace companies from lucrative cooperation with NASA). The Administration, amazingly, threatens a veto, relying on new Russian promises to crack down on supposedly renegade companies. Unless the Russians come up with something better than this, the bill should pass.

■ In one corner: an age-old theocracy, mired in tradition and isolation. In the other: energetic progressives, who put down feudal landlords and raise literacy. Which do Hollywood bleeding hearts side with? The former, so long as the subject is Tibet. *Seven Years in Tibet* and *Kundun* must be the first pair of pro-religion, anti-Communist movies since the early Fifties (or, The McCarthy Era). The Dalai Lama and his stricken people deserve all the attention they can get. But the sins of Left Coast glitterati deserve some attention too, although Buddhists, Christians, and other religious types may find it in their hearts to forgive them.

■ President Clinton's new nominee for Surgeon General, David Satcher, opposes a ban on partial-birth abortions and lobbied against a recent bill mandating that mothers of babies who test HIV positive be notified. Satcher is accordingly under fire from the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Center; Sen. John Ashcroft is threatening a filibuster. Why not skip all this, and just abolish the office of Surgeon General entirely? It has been vacant for three years with no noticeable effect—except that we've been spared lectures in favor of condoms and masturbation, and against smoking.

■ A new movie, *Arguing the World*, which opened recently in Greenwich Village, traces the lives of four New York Jewish intellectuals: Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer, Daniel Bell, and Irving Howe. All four were radical socialists during the 1930s, but also anti-Stalinists. All eventually moved right—except Irving Howe, who remained an embattled and militant "democratic socialist." All of them living the life of ideas, all of them arguing constantly—the effect of their story is almost Virgilian. There were tears in the hearts of the audience and standing applause at the end. The hero of the movie is Irving Howe. But why? Howe's democratic socialism was fanciful, amounting, if it amounted to anything, to higher taxes and more comprehensive insurance coverage. In other words, Sweden. Howe's politics were in fact a cultural preference, rooted in the social matrix described in his powerful book *The World of Our Fathers*, which evoked immigrant Jews in

Legal Notes

Hillary looked blank at
Prosecutor Starr.
Bill deposed as Paula
Ogled from afar.
Herman said no brother
Ever paid her slush.
Aunt Maud in Paducah
Didn't even blush.

—W. H. von Dreele

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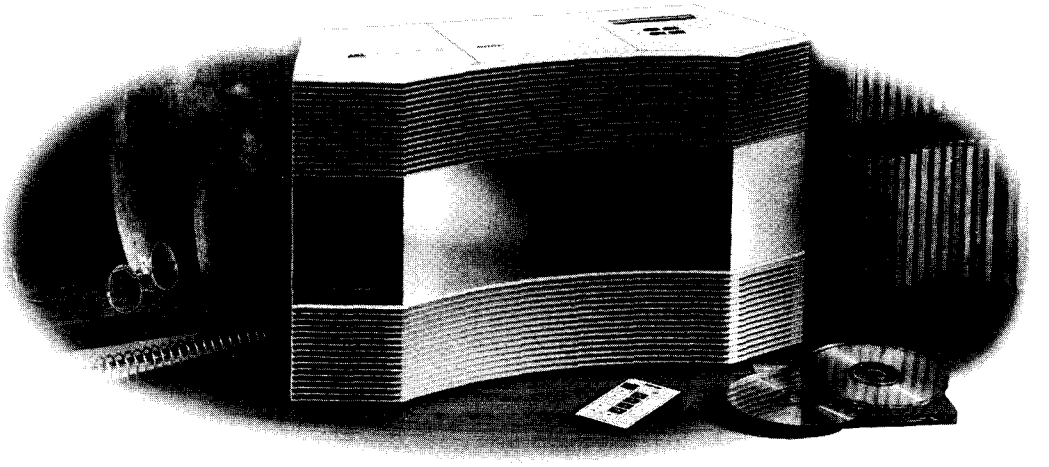

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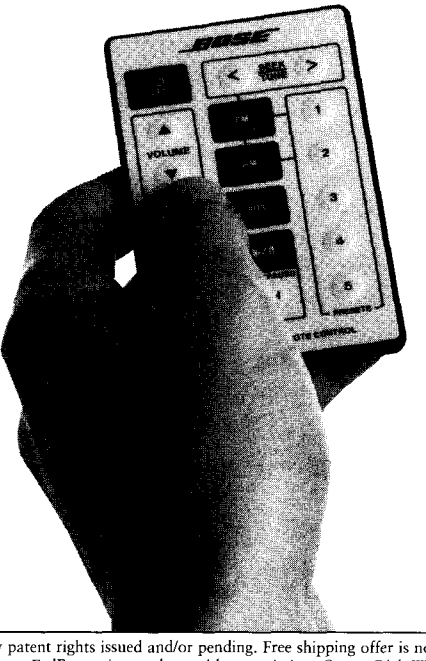

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—W. H. von Dreele

the early days of this century, with their moral and intellectual debt to European Jewish radicalism. Irving Howe did not have a credible socialist program for America, but he had *pietas*. That is why the audience is moved, and why it applauds at the end.

■ After a front-page news story in the *Washington Post* in 1993 described evangelical Christians as "poor, uneducated, and easy to command," the writer was astonished to learn that, statistically, they're anything but. After receiving a snowstorm of protesting letters, he issued a formal apology. Now the *New York Times Book Review* casually repeats the calumny. According to Professor Walter Kendrick, "fundamentalist Christians" are "mostly poor, uneducated, and reside mostly in the Midwest and South." Let the Kendrick Apology Watch begin.

■ Since January 1, smoking in bars has been forbidden by California state law. Apparently, a lot of people didn't like the smoke. It made them cough. The smell clung to their clothes and hair. Some of them worried about the possibility of more serious effects, which was not surprising in a state where the Department of Health Services has implied that smoking near someone is tantamount to assault with a deadly weapon. But if we're going to settle this sort of thing by legislation, perhaps the state should consider other tavern improvements. Start with the loud music. You can't have a conversation without shouting, and all that noise has to be bad for your hearing. Then there are the sexually charged interactions, which create a hostile environment for women who aren't interested in being picked up. And have you seen the amount of *drinking* that goes on in these places?

■ By the way, the California law exempts bars on Indian reservations. First firewater, then fireweed. Why does the Great White Father sleep while the red man coughs?

■ A recent survey on sexual activity, by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, finds what surveys of this sort generally find: that very few American adults have highly active sexual lives. Although "extreme conservatives" are more sexually active than average, they are less so than "extreme liberals." Surprisingly, the survey reports that just 15 per cent of adults are having half of all the sexual activity. We did not think there were that many Kennedys.

■ As soon as NASA announced that Sen. John Glenn would fly one more mission, the jokes started (and we've added one). Let us recall that, before he became a dull and dismal liberal partisan, John Glenn was a flying ace, a test pilot, and a true vessel of the Right Stuff. We will happily forget his intervening career for the duration of his farewell tour.

■ In defending economic sanctions against Iraq, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright proclaimed: "We are not the ones that continue to have weapons of mass destruction." All our fears concerning Clinton Administration arms-control policy have been confirmed.

Reburying Liberalism

IN the last few weeks, President Clinton has proposed expanding Medicare to cover the "near-elderly"; offered an array of tax credits and subsidies for day care; pushed Congress to enact a "patients' bill of rights"; moved to restore food stamps for immigrants; and demanded more increases in the spending on beloved liberal programs like the Peace Corps. By the time he's done, the cost will be $100 billion over five years. All this on top of last year's increase in social spending, the largest in thirty years. Forget Bill Clinton, the New Democrat: the President remains a tax-and-spend liberal.

His agenda would push more children into commercial day care, to the likely detriment of their physical, emotional, and cognitive development. It would recklessly increase the liabilities of an already insolvent Medicare system; some Republican senators have aptly compared this proposal to inviting more passengers aboard the *Titanic*. It would also encourage earlier retirements, an insane economic policy for a country growing ever older.

Yet Republicans do not seem prepared to block most of these proposals. Indeed, many Republicans are sponsors of the patients' bill of rights—as they were of other health regulations in 1996. For two decades, the Federal Government has allowed large employers who provided health insurance to their own workers to avoid cripplingly expensive state mandates. Now Congress is piling on the mandates, and lobbyists for chiropractors and cosmetic surgeons will make sure they keep coming. Many Republicans, of course, oppose these regulations as another step toward nationalized health care; but they tend to be wedded financially and intellectually to a managed-care status quo that is neither very free-market nor politically sustainable. Thus Republicans on both sides of this divide have seen medical savings accounts as a sop to con-

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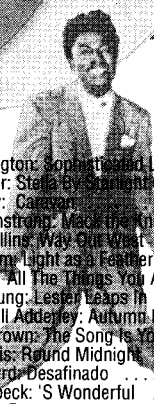

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servatives rather than as a strategic imperative. After a slow start, enrollment in MSAs appears to be taking off. Making them widely available, easing restrictions on them, and giving credible assurances that they will not be revoked should be a priority for Republicans.

Instead, many Republicans are responding to Clinton in two unsatisfactory ways: by imitating him or ignoring him. The proposal of Rep. Bill Paxon (R., N.Y.) to hire 100,000 new teachers—with its echo of Clinton's 1994 promise of 100,000 new cops—falls into the first category. Such a strategy will fail on its own terms: within a week, Clinton was beginning to co-opt Paxon's idea. And why should he not embrace the prospect of 100,000 new members of the teachers' unions?

Speaker Newt Gingrich's press secretary, Christina Martin, took the second approach in a memo urging Republicans to avoid "wasting time swatting at gnats" (i.e., Clinton's unserious, bite-sized ideas) and instead to focus on their own agenda. Which might make sense if they had one. In a speech in early January, Gingrich outlined his own agenda for the next ten years, including: winning the War on Drugs, paying down the national debt, forming a commission on Social Security, giving teachers cellular phones. His preference for across-the-board rather than targeted tax cuts is right, but he seemed to give them a lower priority than paying off the debt or spending more on science and infrastructure. All in all, an agenda for a party that is coasting, not leading.

To lead, Republicans will have to devise and promote policies that both respond to Americans' real problems and increase the constituency for freedom rather than dependency. Both criteria are essential. Of late, Republican policy proposals have been oddly detached from American life. The progressivity of the tax code and duplicative educational bureaucracies, for instance, are unfortunate, but are they really among our most pressing problems? No wonder the public finds Clinton's initiatives more relevant to their own lives—and no wonder savvy pols like Paxon have copied him.

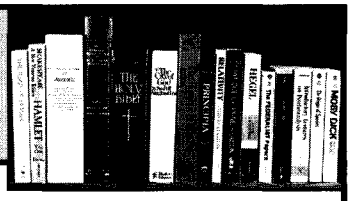
But in adopting Clinton's means they would serve his ends. Clinton's tax-and-spend liberalism entails a commitment to the political strategy that G. Rexford Tugwell—FDR's version of former Clinton pollster Stanley Greenberg—had in mind when he was present at the creation: expanding the constituency for the party of government by increasing Americans' dependence on government.

Scenting Protectionists

Last weekend, Mr. Hawley
Observed to Mr. Smoot
While peering through the cirrus:
"I may not have the snoot
God gave the sainted bloodhound,
But I smell tariff talk."
To which Smoot, blanching, muttered,
"You smell 'em while I gawk."

—W. H. VON DREELE

SUMMER GREAT BOOKS PROGRAM
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



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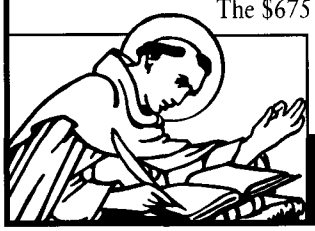

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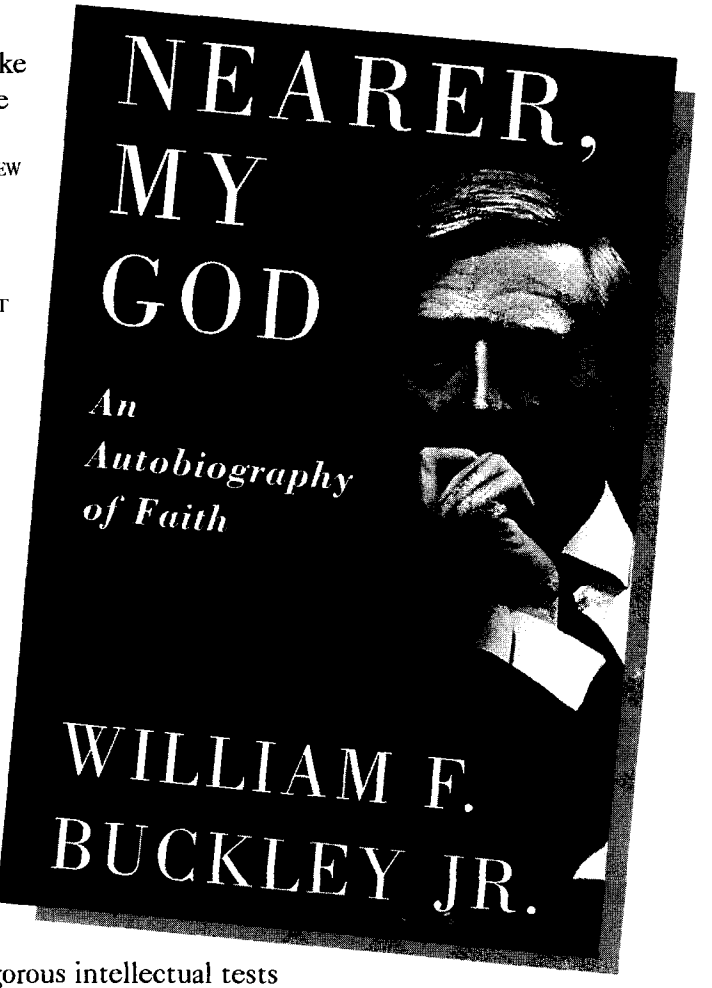
A Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Chosen as one of the Best Books of 1997 by *Publishers Weekly*.



". . .the book never stops being an autobiography. Then, like the best of essays, Buckley's ends where it began, with the question of religious practice in Christian schools."
—The New York Times Book Review

"A splendid story about a modern pilgrim's progress . . . erudite, engaging, poignant, and inspiring."
—William J. Bennett

"This beautiful book might easily be read as a kind of *vita* of the heart, a spiritual narrative that evokes a life that has found joy in the journey." —Our Sunday Visitor

". . . an inspired miscellany rich in anecdote, witty, and animated. What gives it unity as a book is the warmth and the depth of Buckley's faith, at once complex and many-sided and as simple and trusting as a child's."
—Christianity Today

". . . this may well end up a cultural landmark, one that leads, as much or more than it reflects, the religious revival sweeping the country." —The Detroit News

". . . a rollicking adventure story of the spirit, an elaborate trek around and about the lofty peaks of belief and conviction . . . a fascinating, intelligent, and deeply humane demonstration of belief in the face of the most rigorous intellectual tests and challenges. Belief emerges unshaken, and with it a profound sense of peace and purpose."—The Baltimore Sun

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—Lance Morrow

"I am a lifetime unbeliever. I have no reason to think that [my friend] Buckley is aware of that, such is the nature of his civility; I have never raised the point. But on reading this breathtakingly powerful book, a work of Olympian humility, I now know he cares."
—Michael Pakenham

"Buckley has never made a secret of his strong Christian faith, yet he confesses to a temperamental reticence. 'I am not trained in the devotional mode, nor disposed to it' he writes—nor, one might add, the evangelical mode. That is precisely what makes his new book unique . . ."
—Books & Culture

"This work is vintage Buckley: opinionated, articulate, moving, self-righteous, maddening, and elitist but never boring."
—Library Journal

"The philosophical and theological apologetics works in its own framework, but the personal part for me works a whole lot better. It makes the book a Christian classic, something I can give to students to say, here is Christianity, not as a matter of theory or doctrine, but as a living religion. Here he has taught that lesson in a book."
—Professor Jacob Neusner

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That dependence is to be cultivated at every stage of life: when sending children to pre-school, or to college; in sickness and in retirement. To accept Clinton-style solutions to perceived social problems, then, would make the task of future conservative politicians harder.

The conservative alternative is to allow Americans themselves to pay for the things for which Clinton offers subsidies. That means substantial tax cuts. Not just whatever tax cuts can be squeezed into a budget full to bursting with spending projects. And not tax cuts that simply reward Republican interest groups. Rather, we need tax cuts that make it easier both to save and invest, which will expand conservative constituencies by adding to the ranks of the naturally pro-market investing class. On this score, Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer is on exactly the right track. He pledges to push for "the biggest possible tax cut" and is talking of doing it across the board. Archer's goal of a $200-billion net tax reduction over the next ten years can provide a stark and effective contrast to Clinton's $100 billion in new spending.

Finally, Republicans must continue to pursue the realignment of existing constituencies by dividing Democratic politicians from their voters. Republicans can challenge Clinton's indefensible positions on partial-birth abortion, school choice, immigration, racial preferences, defense, and foreign policy, and on such environmentalist flights of fancy as the Kyoto global-warming accord. By charging Clinton with being a liberal, Republicans can shrink his running room on economic issues. The charge will have the additional merit of being true.

Gunning for Bibi

THE cry for "evenhandedness" in Middle East policy used to be an Arabist's appeal to pay heed to our interests in the Arab world instead of always acting on a pro-Israel bias. Now, it is a call for elementary fairness toward Israel instead of fashionable Bibi-bashing.

The Clinton Administration seems never to have reconciled itself to Benjamin Netanyahu's election as Prime Minister or his doctrine of "peace with security." It seems to have no strategy except to try to bring Netanyahu down; the more problematic his political situation is at home, the more Washington tightens the screws. And, in a reversal of the usual pattern, this seems to come more from the White House than from the State Department, as Mr. Clinton is egged on by national-security advisor Sandy Berger (once a board member of the ultra-dovish Americans for Peace Now).

Netanyahu has gotten no credit for his major shifts from Likud's traditional position—now essentially accepting a Palestinian state and partition of the West Bank. His important proposal to move directly to negotiation of the core issues (borders, Palestinian sovereignty, Jerusalem) is spurned. On the one hand, Israel is being asked for concessions *beyond* its commitments in the 1993 Oslo accord (e.g., "significant and credible" Israeli troop redeployments, whereas Oslo left the scope of these redeployments to Israel's discretion); on the other hand, Yasir Arafat is *relieved* of commitments explicitly spelled out in Oslo (including revising the viciously anti-Israel charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization and cracking down decisively on terrorism). Reciprocity is supposed to define the process, as the United States reassured Israel only a year ago. Now reciprocity slips by the boards and Arafat is once again indulged. Absurdly, Clinton even blames Netanyahu for America's difficulties in holding together the coalition against Saddam Hussein.

With Congress coming back to town, the pressure will mount on Clinton to put aside this double standard. The visits to Washington first of Netanyahu and then of Arafat will be tests of Clinton's basic fairness. Netanyahu has made a reasonable offer for the next Israeli redeployment—provided there is reciprocity—and has reiterated his readiness to move quickly to the core issues. The ball is in Arafat's—and Clinton's—court.

IMF Rules

IF anyone wants to know who is the most powerful man in Asia today, consider the spectacle of President Suharto trundling out to release his government's second budget in less than two weeks. Although the budget was read by Suharto, it was written by the International Monetary Fund's director, Michel Camdessus, who put the Indonesian president on the world stage in the manner of a schoolteacher forcing a public apology from an errant pupil ("I believe Johnny has something he'd like to say to all of you"). In contrast to the first budget, this one cut to the quick: ending subsidies for pet government projects; removing special licenses awarded to Suharto's millionaire children; liberalizing investment and trade; dissolving assorted cartels; and, most tellingly, killing the notorious national-car project headed by President Suharto's eldest son, Tommy.

So what's wrong with that? Plenty. Though the market-opening reforms the IMF has been attaching to its loans are medicine that countries such as Indonesia have put off taking for far too long, the austerity packages the IMF insists go with them—tight money, budget tightenings, and sky-high interest rates—will only make this crisis worse and thus discredit the structural reforms. Unlike the crisis in Latin America 15 years ago, which was provoked by governments that spent too much, the crisis in Asia was caused by banks that lent too much (and the corresponding flight of international capital once investors began to realize the extent of the bad debts). The most damning case against the IMF is that it is unnecessary. What is good in the IMF program would be effected without it, and what is bad will get in the way of what is good.

The IMF gets in the way of making people who made

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bad decisions pay for their mistakes. Some of these were Asian banks with strong links to their governments, but they would not have had the wherewithal to make the loans without the foreign banks and investment houses behind them. Indeed, although American politicians complain about U.S. taxpayer dollars going to bail out corrupt Asian countries, the truth is that much of the money will be going to the international banks and investment houses that put up the estimated $65 billion Indonesia now owes in private debt.

By bailing out Mexico in 1994, the Clinton Administration gave international banks the idea that they would not be allowed to go under. By now lending its imprimatur to the IMF program—one reason Suharto submitted to his humiliation at the hands of Camdessus was that Clinton had called him the day before from Air Force One—the White House once again hinders the market from cleaning up its own mistakes. And by signing on to the IMF's insistence on austerity over growth, the U.S. has bought itself the resentment of millions of Thais, Indonesians, and Koreans who will be thrown out of work when their companies are unable to get the credit they need to go on. Even the worst Korean bank would get you a better return than that.

Seeds of Trouble

EVENTUALLY someone, if not Dr. Richard Seed, will be able to open a clinic for cloning human beings. When that happens, let it be in a back alley. Human cloning should be banned—not for five years or ten years, as President Clinton and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.) respectively urge, but always. Deliberately to create human beings for experimental purposes, or for spare parts—or to satisfy someone's vanity—is as deformed morally as the initial results are certain to be physically. Libertarian writer Ronald Bailey argues that having the same genes as another person would not give human clones an inferior moral status, any more than it does identical twins: "Kids are not commercial property—slavery was abolished some time ago." But why should they not be treated as property when they are manufactured rather than begotten? Whence will flow this product's claim to dignity and rights?

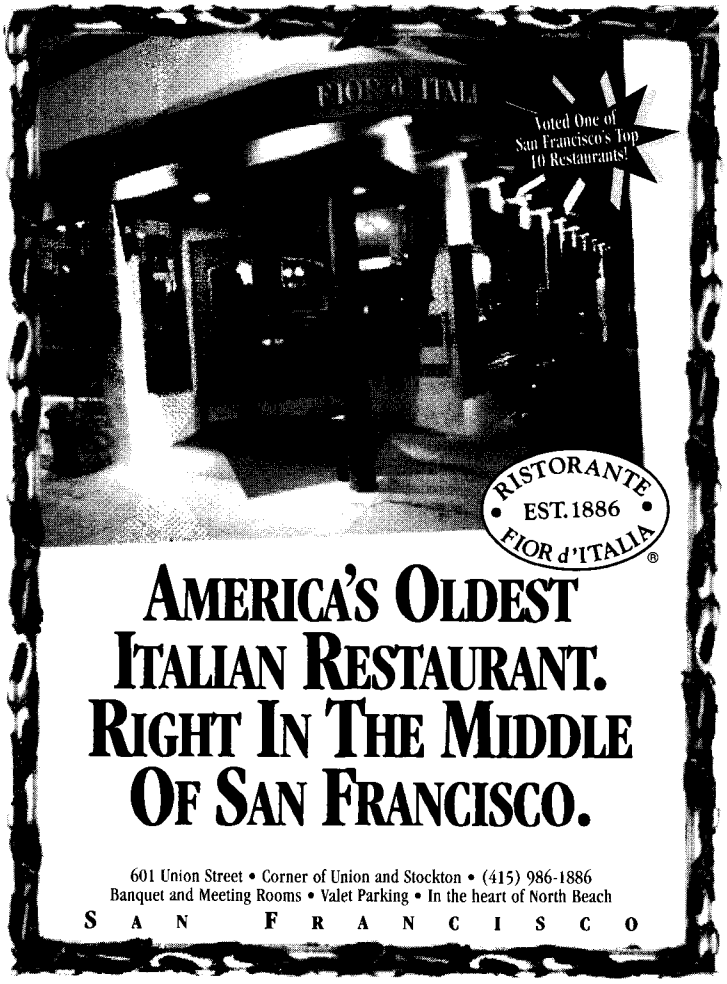
It is true that we have already begun to sever reproduction from sexual intercourse, and Laurence Tribe warns us that to ban cloning would endanger such noble causes as surrogate motherhood and gay adoption. Cloning would, however, be a fateful step from redefining parenthood to redefining the human race. The bans proposed by Reps. Dick Armey (R., Tex.) and Vern Ehlers (R., Mich.) may be overly broad; such bills could forbid the cloning of discrete organs, which does not have the same moral drawbacks, and which could have serious medical benefits. But cloning human beings is a slippery slope, the top rung of which is already in the depths.

Baby Spice

LIKE some weird astrological conjunction, the Rolling Stones and the Spice Girls appeared in Manhattan on the same day. The Spice Girls, in case you don't know, are a rock band which topped charts all over the world last year. The Rolling Stones, in case you aren't old enough to remember, are a rock band which first topped the charts in 1965.

A dozen stories focused on the age differential between the two groups. Until 1971, people the age of the Spice Girls couldn't vote. The Spice Girls themselves, of course, had not been born then. The Rolling Stones are all potential members of the AARP. Add to this that the core fans of the Spice Girls are young ladies aged 9 to 12, and that the managers, record producers, and journalists who first flacked the Rolling Stones, back in the Johnson Administration, were middle-aged men at the time. We are going on three generations which have been engaged in the same cultural enterprise, rock 'n' roll.

Does it matter? Only if maturity matters. The Rolling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Stones are good musicians, the Spice Girls aren't. But the themes of recent popular music are age-limited: youthful energy, youthful amour, youthful Angst. In time, 12-year-olds discover the deep passions of age 17, and then growth stops, as far as the music industry is concerned.

One Spice Girl fan, asked if she knew who the Rolling Stones were, said no, then added, "Are they, like, old?" No, honey. Nobody is old any more.

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

I read with great interest and amusement your letter to Mr. Allan, President of Delta Air Lines, expressing your astonishment at being fed pretzels "on a two-hour first-class flight." Especially noteworthy, however, was your parenthetical note that Mr. Allan was fired from his position after the arrival of your letter. My, my! Surely you jest by implying that Mr. Allan's discharge was the result of your specific complaint. If so, rise up, economy-class travelers, and crank out those letters! We'll show those airline presidents that they had better watch their step (or is it pretzels?).

Regards,
Eugene Spencer
Eagle, Idaho

Dear Mr. Spencer: Well . . . you know, *post hoc ergo propter hoc*! Or is that a fallacy? Cordially, WFB

■ To WFB:

I can't remember ever reading anything in *NR* that charmed me as much as your autobiographical "The Beginnings of Faith." In it, you describe an illustrative story as a "parable" and wonder whether that's the right word. As a Spanish speaker, you no doubt know that the standard Spanish Bible, Valera, uses either *parábola* or *ejemplo* in those places where our King James Version says "parable." Both Valera and King James, of course, are translations made early in the seventeenth century from original sources, which for the New Testament meant Greek. Pretty clearly, the original Greek word must have been *parabola*, in a rhetorical departure from its usual mathematical sense. As such, it appears to have given Renaissance translators some trouble. Valera's scholars dealt with it by interchanging two words, implying synonymity. The King James people, on the other hand, appear simply to have invented a new word, with an implied meaning all its own. (This is mere conjecture on my part, by the way. I haven't done any real research into the matter, beyond Bible reading.)

It is less easy to imagine that either team of translators realized that parabolas focus light, as in lenses, concave mirrors, and the like. Greek philosophers knew all about parabolas and their properties centuries before Christ. But seventeenth-century clerics may well not have.

In any case, it would appear that the original Bible makers, needing a noun to designate stories which focused light, borrowed a word from science and used it figuratively. And that's why "parable," in the place and in the way you use it, seems so absolutely right.

John S. Mason Jr.
Alexandria, Va.

Dear Mr. Mason: Well thanks very much. If you are not a scholar, then pity the scholars who spend so much unnecessary time! Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

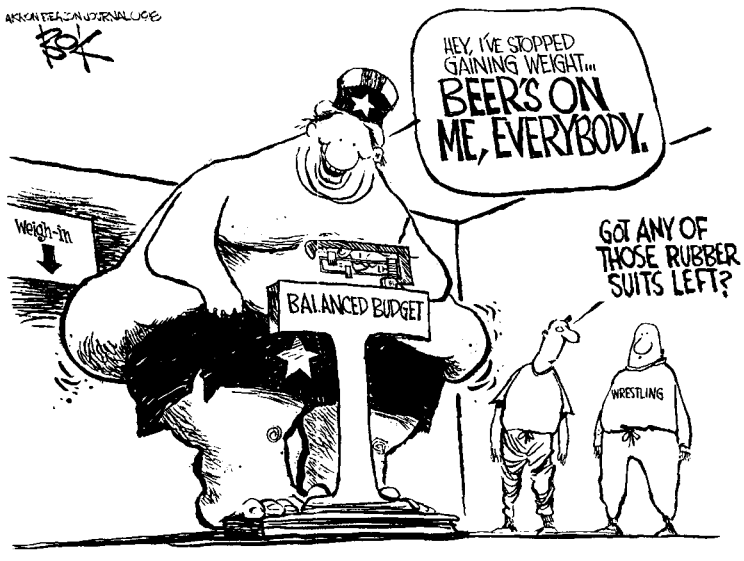
Reading your syndicated column, I was surprised and amused to find that you haven't quite got a grasp on Pig Latin, although you may boast of several other languages.

My own recollection of Pig Latin is somewhat fuzzy, and so I sought documentation on the Internet that may serve as a refresher course. The following is excerpted from Dr. Rix Spanish Pig Latin Page, www.muw.edu/~rmccalli/SpIgpayAtinlay.html: "U.S. Pig Latin is formed by moving the initial consonant or consonant cluster to the end of the word and adding -ay. When the word in question begins with a vowel, dialect differences arise. Depending on the region, you add -hay, -way, -yay, or just plain -ay."

The key is *consonant cluster*. If you will recall, you erroneously translated *shack* as *hackshay*. According to the good doctor, shack is correctly translated *ackshay*. I am certain much of America's youth would back him up.

Sincerely,
Carey Hardin
Huntington, W.S.Va.

Dear Mr. Hardin: I surrender. Ordiallycay, **—WFB**


HEY, I'VE STOPPED GAINING WEIGHT... BEER'S ON ME, EVERYBODY.
Weigh-in
BALANCED BUDGET
GOT ANY OF THOSE RUBBER SUITS LEFT?
WRESTLING

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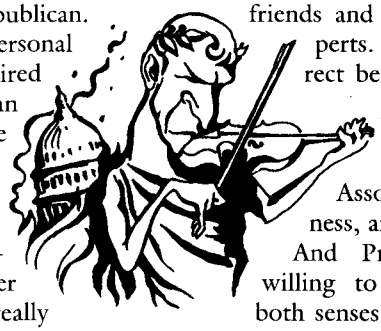
BREAD & CIRCUSES

Yuppie Care

DURING a radio debate last week, Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D., Calif.) told me that she enthusiastically supports Bill and Hillary Clinton's $22-billion federal day-care initiative because she had a premature baby a few years ago and had some trouble finding a babysitter. Mrs. Tauscher was elected to Congress in 1996, spending $1.7 million of her own money to defeat an incumbent Republican. With a fraction of her personal war chest, she could have hired a neo-natal team from San Francisco General to care for her child. But she believes that her tale bolsters her case. In the brief time she has spent in Washington so far, Rep. Tauscher has learned how policy is really made. Despite stacks of studies and discs of data, legislation typically amounts to government by anecdote.



The coming day-care debate is particularly liable to the personal-ordeal paradigm. Washington, D.C., has the country's highest percentage of families with both parents working. Their experience tells them that parents with young children either want to pursue their careers at all costs, or must work to keep the wolf from the door (actually, to keep the BMW in the drive). While there is no evidence of a national problem crying out for a federal solution, lawmakers and their aides will generalize from their own situations to justify legislation.

Life outside the Beltway is, as in other matters, quite different. Nationwide, more than three-quarters of preschool-aged children have mothers who do not work outside the home, or who do so only part-time. Relatives take care of roughly half of children whose mothers are employed outside the home. Controlling for inflation, the cost of day care hasn't increased over the past twenty years despite increased demand (which has leveled off in recent years), and working parents report that they are satisfied with the day care their children receive. Working parents are not clamoring for better day care—hence Mrs. Clinton's reference to a "silent crisis."

Polls show that what working mothers do want is to work fewer hours in order to spend more time with their children. But the Clintons' initiative has nothing to do with what's good for children or appealing to parents. They really *believe* that "it takes a village to raise a child"—but a village not of friends and relatives, but of experts. Hence, the most direct benefits in the Clinton proposal go to the day-care lobby, the National Education Association, big business, and career women. And President Clinton is willing to spend liberally—in both senses of the word—on all these constituencies. The new spending over five years would include: a $7.5-billion increase for the child-care block grant, a $5.2-billion addition to the dependent-care tax credit, $500 million in tax credits for employers, $800 million for after-school programs, $6.8 billion for new and old early-childhood-education programs, and $850 million to professionalize day-care workers. We can only imagine the kind of spending a *noisy* crisis would entail.

The majority of families with children will not get a dime of these funds—because they don't use professional day care. Instead, because of the tax credit, less affluent one-earner families (median income: $39,000) will be subsidizing the day-care costs for generally more affluent (median income: $58,000) two-earner couples.

When challenged about the White House's failure to provide assistance to mothers who stay at home, Bruce Reed, the President's domestic-policy advisor, responded defensively: The President would *like* to help parents at home but he lacks the money to do so. Reed surely would say that the President would like to help small businesses as well. But the proposed new business tax credits are for setting up on-site facilities, training child-care workers, and providing referral services—amenities generally feasible only for large corporations. To the extent that this makes big firms more attractive to workers, it could lure them away from small firms in a tight labor market.

Supporters of the Clintons' day-care scheme say all the spending is necessary because the 1996 welfare reform is pushing welfare mothers into the workforce. But the welfare-reform bill included $22 billion in child-care funding, and last year's balanced-budget deal provided the states with another $3 billion. This is in addition to the large surpluses states are enjoying as a result of declining welfare rolls.

Meanwhile, the biggest problem facing families with young children is that government takes about 40 per cent of their paycheck. They can't expect any meaningful relief so long as they are caught up in Washington's perpetual spending cycle: family budgets are stretched thinner and thinner as taxes inch up; Congress responds by helping with housing, health care, or education costs; and taxes inch up some more to pay for it.

Because the Clinton plan responds to a manufactured need it is more vulnerable than many Republicans think. Nonetheless, some of them are already providing cover for the Administration.

REP. Constance Morella (R., Md.) attended the White House conference at which the day-care proposals were unveiled. Rep. Deborah Pryce (R., Ohio), meanwhile, hit a cautious note in responding to Mr. Clinton on behalf of the GOP leadership. She explained that she was pleased that the President had resisted "the urge to have the Federal Government control child care." This is the kind of opposition the White House must love.

Sen. Larry Craig (R., Idaho) offers much sharper criticism on behalf of his Senate Republican Policy Committee. Sen. Craig opposes the plan as an unwarranted federal intrusion that discriminates against the great majority of parents in favor of institutional providers. Republicans would do well to pick up this line, and to use an anecdote of their own: Danielle Crittenden reports that many humane societies will not permit a couple to adopt a dog or cat if they both work full-time. If only Washington had similar solicitude for America's children. —KATE O'BEIRNE

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SHE'S GOT NEXT

The Other Dole Campaign

Who is Elizabeth Dole? Her greatest political asset may be that nobody knows.

RAMESH PONNURU

WASHINGTON, D.C.

BEFORE her wedding, on December 6, 1975, Elizabeth Hanford rehearsed her vows again and again; the groom, Bob Dole, just winged it. The speeches each gave during the 1996 presidential campaign followed the same pattern: his were off-the-cuff, hers polished to translucence. As a result, he would trample through a bog of half-sentences and insider shorthand, while she would wow audiences with her articulateness and poise.

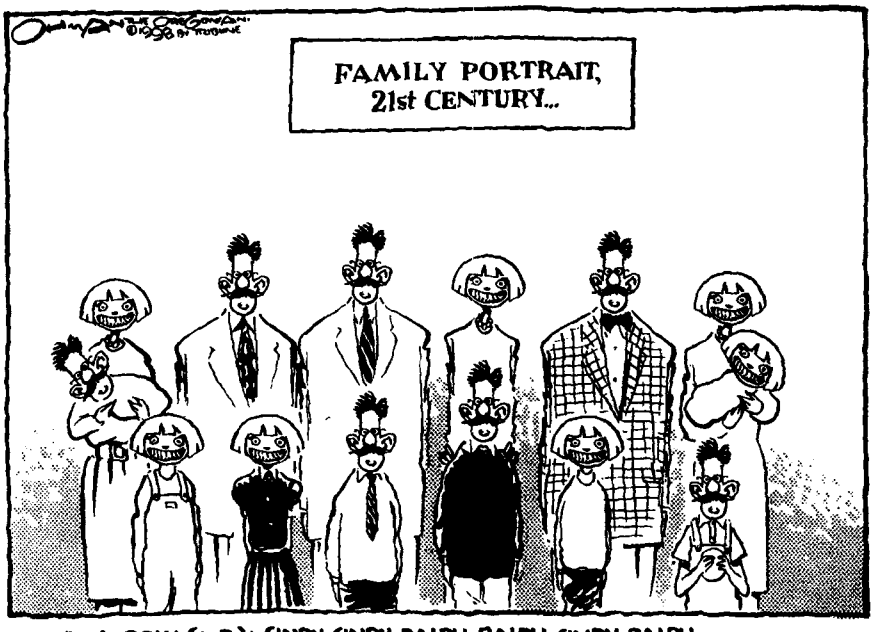
Hard work and thorough preparation have brought Elizabeth Dole to a political height unprecedented for an American woman of her generation. As she considers whether to run for the summit in 2000 or to stay on as president of the Red Cross, she is likely to weigh her options just as methodically as she has done everything else. According to polls, she would be one of the Republican Party's strongest candidates. She appeals to Christian conservatives and the party establishment, a rare combination. She can raise funds; everyone knows her name—her candidacy would have everything. Everything, that is, but a rationale.

It wouldn't have one for the same reason she is so popular with such a broad range of people: no one really knows what her politics are. Although she has been in public life for more than three decades, in Administrations of both parties, somehow Elizabeth Dole has managed to keep her political views largely under wraps. Even close associates sometimes forget that she got her start working for LBJ; she was a volunteer worker on the Kennedy–Johnson campaign in 1960 and then, after Harvard Law, joined Johnson's Office of Consumer Affairs. To the surprise of some colleagues, she stayed there when Nixon took power in 1969. In 1973, President Nixon appointed her to the Federal Trade Commission.

In both positions, she pursued the policies of an activist liberal. She was a fairly reliable vote for regulation and trust-busting at the FTC. She called for a Consumer Protection Agency, the main Naderite goal of the day. As late as 1977 she was defending that view in public debates with her husband. Government programs were necessary "to replace the outmoded and socially irresponsible notion of *caveat emptor*," she would explain later, in the Doles' 1988 campaign book, *Unlimited Partners*. (The title was unfortunate, reinforcing the cynical Beltway view of the marriage as a business arrangement: "Were they married by a mergers and acquisitions specialist?" cracks one Democratic speechwriter.)

This record didn't keep her from becoming a loyal member of the Reagan Administration. At its start she headed the White House public liaison office and led a task force on women. She tried, unsuccessfully, to promote "comparable worth," the feminist notion that government should set and enforce a "fair" wage for secretaries in relation to plumbers. In 1983, the perceived need for a woman in the Cabinet and lobbying by her husband got her appointed Secretary of Transportation.

IN each job she worked as hard as ever, looking after the public image of the Administration but relying heavily on assistants for policy details. She would master those details only in politically important cases. That focus annoyed some career staffers at the Department of Transportation, but it probably helped President Reagan, whose agenda lay elsewhere. DoT never caused him any problems under Mrs. Dole. And she demonstrated considerable tactical savvy, knowing when to deploy her Southern charm and when to show flashes of the steel amid the magnolias. According to many former associates,


FAMILY PORTRAIT, 21st CENTURY...
FIRST ROW (L-R): CINDY, CINDY, RALPH, RALPH, CINDY, RALPH.
SECOND ROW (L-R): RALPH, CINDY, RALPH, RALPH, CINDY, RALPH, CINDY, CINDY.

Mr. Ponnuru is NR*'s national reporter.*

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the major drawback of her managerial style—aside from occasional bursts of temper—was that her extensive preparation often came at the price of prolonged indecision.

Her work at DoT included some real victories for the Reagan Administration: privatizing Conrail; devolving control over Dulles and National airports; privatizing landing slots at major airports; blocking persistent efforts by congressmen, including Newt Gingrich, to reregulate the airlines. In a reversal of the policy that had prevailed throughout the Seventies, Mrs. Dole approved a score of airline mergers.

But she remained devoted to federally imposed safety regulations. She opposed Reagan's raising of the 55-mile-per-hour national speed limit, pushed for a mandatory third rear brake light (which had no lasting effect on auto safety), and bribed states to raise their drinking age to 21. Legal developments arguably left her no choice but to mandate airbags for cars—but she did so enthusiastically. It was as if her personal obsession with control and caution spilled over into her policymaking. "In all my efforts to promote safer transportation, I tried to respect individual choice," she wrote in *Unlimited Partners*. But airbags had to be designed just so; speed limits could not be raised; people wouldn't buckle up on their own. (Mrs. Dole also supported fuel-efficiency standards that had the perverse effect of taking more lives than airbags save.)

Elizabeth Dole is capable of writing things like, 'Perhaps no one in our society is more unjustly maligned than the bureaucrat.'

Another continuity was her seamless and apparently un-self-conscious blend of public service and private ambition. Elizabeth Dole's conception of public service is deeply statist. She is capable of writing things like, "Perhaps no one in our society is more unjustly maligned than the bureaucrat." And she regards the main purpose of government as "to make a difference to the plight of people in need," as she recently told Henry Louis Gates Jr.—as opposed, say, to preserving public order. She has, by all accounts, done a praiseworthy job of modernizing the Red Cross, but her campaign to ban land mines suggests a weakness for a politics of gestural sentimentality that, in this case, even Bill Clinton has rejected.

Her conservatism, meanwhile, seems to consist of generic pro-business and pro-tradition inclinations. An official who had frequent dealings with her at the time explains that when the Reagan Administration had a clear policy, she effectively promoted it. But in the absence of marching orders, he says, "she never tried to be imaginative in trying to do what she should have known Reagan would want her to do if he had the time to focus on it."

In the same way, when she served briefly as George Bush's Labor Secretary, she helped to defeat child-care legislation he opposed. But when she had more latitude, as on the issue of the "glass ceiling" allegedly keeping women out of executive positions, she set in motion a commission that validated feminist orthodoxy.

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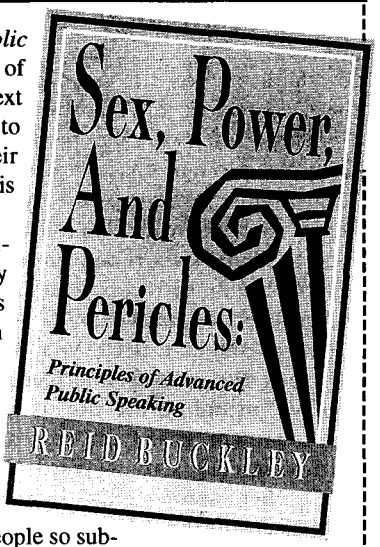

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A soft but pervasive feminism, indeed, runs throughout her career. In the Sixties and Seventies she used federal power to stop what she regarded as scams against financially inexperienced women. In the Eighties she often cheered the "tidal wave" of women entering the work force. She was proud to establish an on-site day-care center at the Department of Transportation. In *Unlimited Partners*, she takes comfort from the thought that social change is "challenging the sexual stereotyping that begins at birth, when a pink blanket is used to identify a girl and simultaneously limit the range of opportunities open to her when she grows up."

When her microphone went dead in San Diego, she was able to recover gracefully because she had been warned it might happen.

As one might expect, Mrs. Dole has also long shown a commitment to "diversity," including the use of preferential treatment based on race and sex. Anti-preference activist Ward Connerly recalls her approaching him after a fundraiser in the fall of 1996 to ask whether her practices in government would meet his standards. "What struck me," he says, "was [that] the kind of affirmative action she was talking about was precisely the kind that we were trying to get rid of. . . . It was almost like I was in a debate from twenty years ago."

THE current debate concerns whether Mrs. Dole should enter the Republican presidential primaries. Mari Maseng Will, a Republican operative in the Doles' orbit for almost two decades, says that Mrs. Dole has been pondering the question with close advisors in recent months. Most of them are encouraging her. Her huge name recognition and fundraising prowess give her more time than most potential candidates would have to agonize over the question—and she's likely to take all of it. A possible game plan: she could, on her own time, campaign for a few initiatives and House and Senate candidates this fall; act conspicuously coy while having aides create a buzz around Thanksgiving; and enter the race with a splash in early 1999.

An Elizabeth Dole candidacy would generate instant excitement simply because, as former aide Cindy Williams notes, "You've got 18 nominees potentially and one of them wears a skirt." In addition, she has more campaign experience than almost anyone else in the GOP. Her skills on the stump need no elaboration for anyone who watched her masterly performance at the San Diego convention in 1996. (A note to those who didn't: She said her husband was tender, trustworthy, kind to the poor, and friendly to the Senate help, so vote for him.)

Republican *Über*-pundit Bill Kristol even argues that Mrs. Dole will turn out to be a stronger establishment candidate than Gov. George W. Bush of Texas, the perceived front-runner, because of her ties to Christian conservatives and because "the party is so obsessed with the gender gap."

Mrs. Williams, who is working on that obsession for the House leadership, goes further: "I think there would be nothing better for American women than to have her run." Rod DeArment, a former aide to both Doles, notes that she is "almost deified by the Republican women's groups," which "are really an army of volunteers and . . . do a lot of the work of the party day in and day out."

Elizabeth Dole by Roman Genn

But gender solidarity doesn't win elections: just ask Geraldine Ferraro, or Christine Todd Whitman, or Ronna Romney. Elizabeth Dole's campaign could well peak on announcement day. A campaign would not play to her greatest strength: her ability to master a script. When her microphone went dead in San Diego, she was able to recover gracefully because she had been warned it might happen and had planned for the contingency. Even a perfectionist can't prepare for the rough-and-tumble of a national campaign. The last election Mrs. Dole won was in 1958—for May Queen at Duke.

If she wants the Presidency, she should run this time. In the first place, the race is wide open. In the second place, she does not have the option of using a vice-presidential nomination as a springboard for a later bid: in 2008 she will be 72. So will she run? DeArment says it's "a fifty-fifty proposition." My bet is no. But she is definitely in the top tier of Veep possibilities—right now, only Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge is in the same league. Her political indeterminacy means she can balance anyone. She can be everything to everyone, just as the early Ross Perot and Colin Powell could.

Consider, for instance, her position on abortion. More than one anti-abortion activist said in 1996 that while they didn't trust Bob Dole, they thought his wife would be a good influence on him because she had had a spiritual reawakening in 1983. Her pro-life rhetoric, however, is more recent than that. In a 1987 profile for *The Washington Monthly*, Philip Weiss had fun with her comments to the *New York Times* in 1980 ("I think it's just about the most difficult question there is, and one I'm still wrestling with") and to him seven years later ("It is the toughest question I have ever had to wrestle with, and frankly I am still wrestling with it"). All that wrestling to so little effect! But how very like Elizabeth Dole: scripted, indecisive, careful not to offend.

As first reported by Sidney Blumenthal in *The New Yorker*, former New Hampshire state senator Susan McLane says that Mrs. Dole approached her in 1988 and reassured her that while her husband had to campaign as a pro-lifer, he wouldn't really do anything about it. "She certainly didn't appear to be very anti-abortion,"

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says Sen. McLane, who has since become a Democrat and joined the national board of a leading abortion-rights group. Mrs. Dole has not explained the evolution of her views on abortion—or, for that matter, on other subjects where her record looks inconsistent.

In *Unlimited Partners*, Mrs. Dole invokes the motto of her home state of North Carolina: "To be, rather than to seem." If she decides to run for high office, she may stumble over the question that, after all this time, she has not answered: whether she is everything she seems to be. □

ANC Agonistes

Can Nelson Mandela's successor retain the support of South African blacks without rejecting that of whites?

R. W. JOHNSON

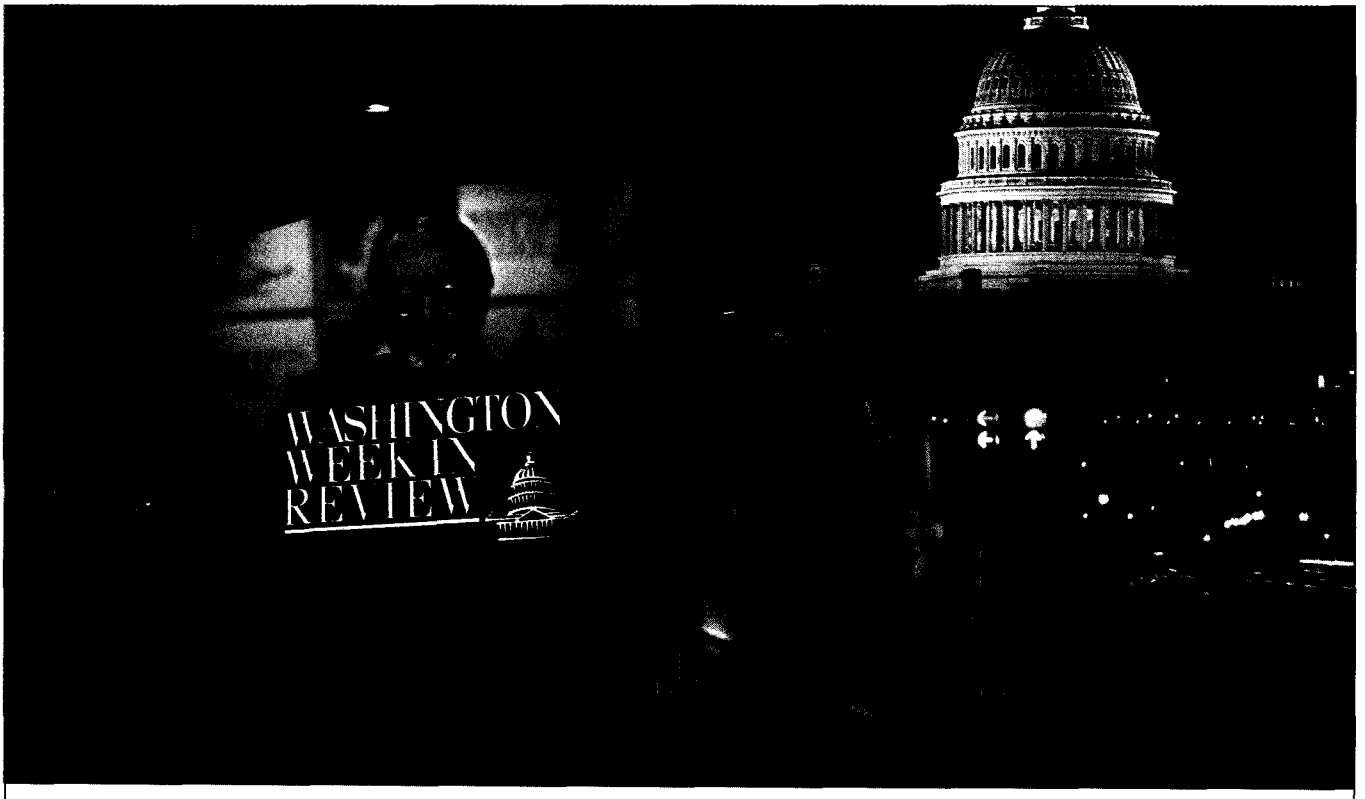
JOHANNESBURG

WHITE South Africans are still reeling from the impact of Nelson Mandela's valedictory speech as president of the ruling African National Congress. Until then Mandela had preached "national reconciliation" in a rainbow nation. Whites, many of whom feel guilty—with some reason—about the past, have been delighted to grasp the proffered hand of black friendship.

But in a five-hour tirade on December 16, Mandela excoriated the enemies of the "national democratic revolution," linking the media, opposition parties, non-governmental organizations, and sundry others in a vast counterrevolutionary conspiracy. He and other ANC spokesmen have suggested that South Africa's crime wave (a murder rate 11 times as high as New York City's, etc.) is being deliberately encouraged by whites. Some of the businesses and newspapers thus condemned are actually run by blacks, but Mandela dismisses them as puppets.

Whites are the more frightened by this change in rhetoric because of what is happening across the border in Zimbabwe. There, President Mugabe, after 17 years of economic failure, has announced the expropriation of hundreds of white-owned farms, a move that is expected to cause agricultural production to fall by 35 per cent (the value of the currency has already dropped 60 per

Mr. Johnson writes on South Africa for the London Times, *the* London Review of Books, *and the* New Statesman.



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cent). For the first time, many South African whites, Asians, and Coloureds—and not a few blacks—are looking into the abyss and wondering whether, after all, South Africa will follow Zimbabwe down.

The ANC government, elected amidst such euphoria in 1994, has in most respects been an enormous failure.

Forces beyond Mandela's control are in play. His speech was a collective ANC effort, with the dominant influence being that of his successor, Thabo Mbeki. Mbeki—who as deputy president has been running the government for some time already—has worried that once he formally took over he would be compared unfavorably to Mandela the hero. Now, if Mbeki moves in a more radical direction, he will have plenty of supporting statements from the great man himself.

Another, larger reason for Mandela's speech was that the ANC government, elected amidst such euphoria in 1994, has in most respects been an enormous failure. The ANC posters at that time promised "Jobs, jobs, jobs": unemployment has risen. The ANC promised to build a million houses. Not even a third of that number has been built. Extravagant promises in health and education have gone unrealized as well.

The most important expectation of all was that the ANC, as a fully "legitimate" majority party, would have the authority to restore law and order. Instead crime has soared. And—thanks to unwise affirmative-action appointments and over-ambitious attempts to legislate everything—the state administration appears to be collapsing. Everywhere one looks—the ports, the post office, the deeds office, the schools, the police—there is general collapse. This is even true of the jails: there are now several jail breaks a week.

In one sense, this should come as no surprise. Samuel Huntington points out that in transitions to democracy the first of the new governments without exception have been failures; that most of the second governments are failures too; and that it is only with the third that there is much hope of improvement. So, in this context, South Africa is simply on par. But ANC activists promised—and expected—nothing less than instant social, psychological, and economic liberation.

Many of them were reared on vulgar Marxism, and if liberation has not brought them what was promised, they are disposed to believe that this failure is the result of a white conspiracy. That is why for these activists, the heart of the ANC, Mandela's speech was so deeply reassuring—and why for everyone else it was so disturbing.

It was all too common a generation ago to see African countries with peasant economies go into spirals of decline under hegemonic Marxist parties. But today's South Africa is a country of six-lane highways, jet planes, and computers. It is locked into the global market economy far more tightly than the peasant economies to its north. To copy in South Africa the ideological antics of a

Kwame Nkrumah or Sékou Touré—who impoverished the already poor countries of Ghana and Guinea in the 1960s—would simply be national suicide.

THABO Mbeki has been fond of saying, whenever something doesn't work properly, that it is because of the inheritance of apartheid. Lately, he has altered this, saying that it is not just apartheid that needs to be redressed but three hundred years of colonialism. The kernel of truth in this is that apartheid has bequeathed South Africa a badly educated and psychologically damaged black elite. That elite nonetheless insists that its political predominance must be matched as rapidly as possible by "transformation" (i.e., black predominance) in every other public arena as well. Given the complexity of South Africa's economy, the current disarray is the inevitable result.

The ANC came to power promising a massive Reconstruction and Development Program—a huge unfunded wish-list of projects. When it became clear that carrying out this program was simply impossible and that the currency was collapsing (the Rand has fallen 45 per cent since 1994), Mbeki sharply altered course to the Growth, Equality, and Redistribution program. Known as Gear, the new program committed the state to cutting inflation, spending, and debt, to privatizing key industries, and to liberalizing the labor market. The powerful Communist Party and Communist-led trade unions have successfully resisted both the privatization and labor reforms. But inflation, public spending, and debt have all been brought down. Businesses, both domestic and foreign, have been reassured by the government's adherence to these goals. In effect, the government's commitment to Gear is its promise to investors that it will observe economic rationality.

But the government is now caught in a major bind. On the one hand Gear's deflationary effect has pushed the growth rate down to under 2 per cent, and unemployment is rising sharply. This, plus a long list of unfulfilled promises, is the last thing the ANC needs as it heads toward the April 1999 presidential and parliamentary elections. On the other hand, the logic of economic rationality does not stop at cutting the public debt: it ought to mean giving priority to law and order, halting the crazier forms of affirmative action, deregulating the labor market, and pushing ahead with privatization.

An African nationalist who looks at that list will object that this amounts to trying to make South Africa the sort of country where the white minority will be happy to stay because its concerns are being addressed. Well, exactly.

For historical reasons South Africa's white, Asian, and Coloured populations constitute the country's major reservoir not only of capital but also of educated manpower, entrepreneurial and technical skills, and managerial expertise. If the South African economy is to grow —or even to stay on the rails—these groups have to be kept tolerably satisfied; already the economy has been damaged by the brain drain resulting from white emigration. ANC rule has led to a prodigious growth in the number of middle-class blacks, but most of these people either are employed in gov-

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ernment or are the beneficiaries of government patronage; this class is in no way a substitute for the people who have kept the economy moving.

An African nationalist will object that this amounts to trying to make South Africa the sort of country where whites will be happy to stay. Well, exactly.

Thus the ANC is caught on the horns of not one but many dilemmas. It wants to keep pushing jobs and contracts toward those it politically and ethnically prefers, but this is damaging not only the economy but also the government's ability to deliver on anything else. It sees white businessmen as the enemy, but as the state machine implodes it finds itself more dependent on them than ever. It has promised black emancipation and finds itself presiding over the rocketing growth of inequality among blacks as the middle class fattens on government largesse and the poor continue to sink.

The ANC's Communist and trade-union allies have gone along with all this in pursuit of their dream of pushing the "national democratic revolution" to a second, socialist phase. But it is now apparent to everyone that the great promises of liberation have not been kept. Even within the ANC there is deep inward panic over the possibility that the first black-run government in South Africa will slip into the same cycle of corruption and incompetence seen elsewhere on the continent.

What Nelson Mandela's speech really represented was a desperate throwing up of hands, a refusal to confront these dilemmas, and a determination to blame the whites for any and every problem. For his part, Mr. Mbeki—who has not one white face among his hundreds of advisors, assistants, and officials—publicly maintains a proud belief that South Africa will lead something he calls "the African renaissance." No matter what, the ANC still enjoys such massive black good will that it will waltz to victory in the next election. But as of now it would be difficult to raise many bets here against the likelihood that Mbeki's government will bear out Huntington's maxim of failure. □

The Lost Bug

The old VW Beetle won the hearts of Americans. Guess why its successor doesn't have a chance.

ERIC PETERS

THE new Volkswagen Beetle symbolizes many things, including our continued romance with all things Baby Boomer. The Bug is the car in which Boomers were raised; it provided the transportation during the Summer of Love. But the differences between the Volkswagen of the Nineties and the beloved Beetle of the Sixties provide a disconcerting illustration of how America has changed in thirty years.

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Mr. Peters is an automotive writer in Washington, D.C., and a nationally syndicated columnist.

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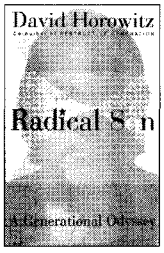

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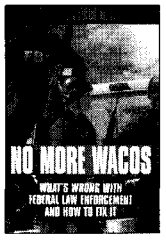

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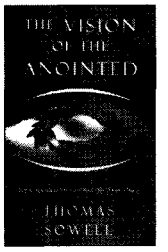

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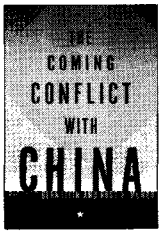

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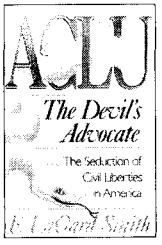

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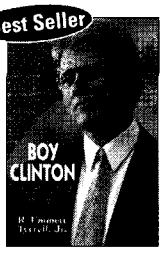

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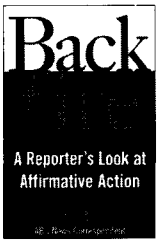

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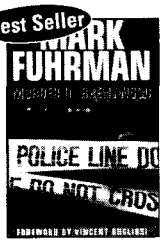

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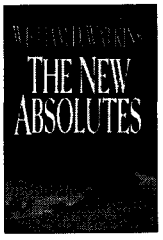

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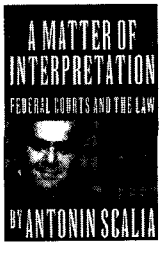

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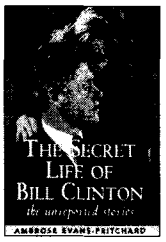

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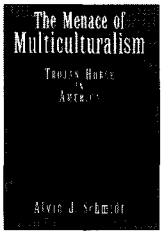

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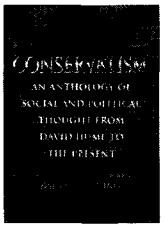

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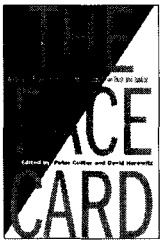

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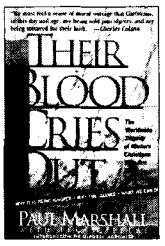

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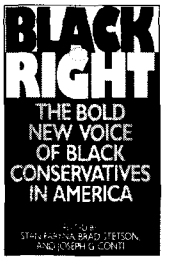

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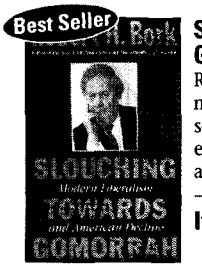

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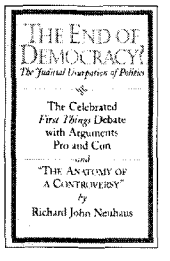
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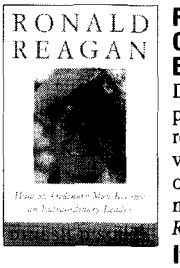

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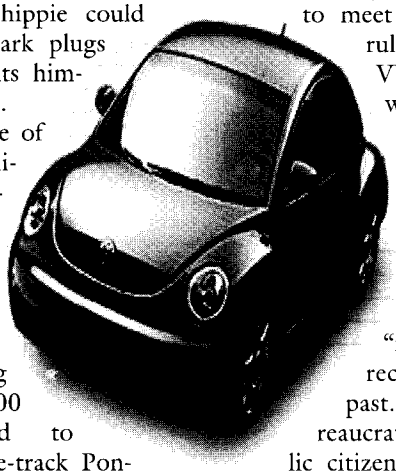
air-cooled engine that needed no radiator, and hence no antifreeze, and no hoses—just one fan belt. It was so simple that a torpid hippie could change the four spark plugs and adjust the points himself for less than $15.



The body was one of the very first "unitized" designs (integral frame and body) ever brought to mass market, designed to cut costs and reduce squeaks and rattles. Weighing in at a sprightly 1,800 pounds (compared to 3,995 for the "wide-track Pontiac") the frugal Beetle could deliver 27 miles per gallon on the highway, while Detroit-built dreadnoughts were down around 8 to 12 mpg.

The Beetle could be so economical because there were no air bags, no "crumple zones," no 5-mph bumpers to weigh it down. No computers or emissions controls detracted from the elemental simplicity of the air-cooled "boxer" engine developed by Ferdinand Porsche.

By the 1970s an onslaught of regulations from acronymic government agencies—DOT, EPA, NHTSA—was beginning to make it impossible to bring cheap basic transportation to market. Consumers' preferences would now take a back seat to government's.

By the 1970s, regulation was beginning to make it impossible to provide cheap, basic transportation.

What happened next is well known. American Motors—small and thus less able to retool—quickly went belly up. Chrysler was rescued from the slab only by the good offices of the very government that had nearly sealed its doom. General Motors and Ford suffered stupendous losses right up until the early 1990s—and lost market share to the Japanese that they will not recover in the foreseeable future.

As for VW, it had to pull the venerable Beetle from the U.S. market when it was no longer possible (technically or economically) to modify it sufficiently to meet the ever-more stringent rules of Uncle Sam. In 1979 VW replaced the Beetle with the depressing Rabbit—an ugly little drone with none of the endearing panache of its predecessor.

The spell was broken, and customers began to shop elsewhere. The "new" Bug is an effort to recapture the glow of days past. But the meddling of bureaucrats and professional "public citizens" has made the revived Beetle little more than a faint stylistic echo of its former self.

Underneath the new Beetle's familiar half-moon bodywork there are front-wheel drive, a water-cooled motor, airbags, an anti-lock braking system, and an engine with complicated computer controls. And the new Beetle carries a price tag that would choke a horse.

People are yearning for a genuinely frugal car that doesn't take a five-year loan to buy. Just ask folks south of the Border. Tens of thousands of "old" Bugs are still being built every year in countries that haven't yet enacted U.S.-style safety and emissions legislation.

That doesn't mean there's anything wrong with building a car that doesn't pollute much, and that will protect its occupants in a wreck. But don't expect it to come cheap, or become a legend. □

Black Madonna

Toni Morrison's popularity is less a matter of literary taste than of mass psychology.

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

THE other day on a street near *NR*'s offices I passed a deranged man who was shouting to himself. "Spanish mackerel?" he demanded. "I didn't even know there was such a thing as Spanish mackerel!" Then he was gone, and I never learned what had got him onto the subject of that particular fish or what he found so astonishing about it.

Listening to people like that, and hopelessly trying to guess what they're talking about, is not unlike the experience of plowing through Toni Morrison's new novel.

Yes, that's the same Toni Morrison whose beatific Black Madonna face shines down from the cover of the current *Time* magazine, where she is heralded as "America's Greatest Storyteller." It's the same Toni Morrison who has lately been calling forth, from critics and feature reporters, geysers of foaming prose even worse than her own. My favorite tribute is John Leonard's in *The Nation*: "So abundant, even prodigal, is Toni Morrison's first new novel since her Nobel Prize, so symphonic, light-struck, and sheer, as if each page had been rubbed transparent . . . that I realize I've been holding my breath since December 1993. After such levitation, weren't all of us in for a fall? Who knew she'd use the prize as a kite instead of a wheelbarrow?" Those sentences had, from the sound of them, been in Mr. Leonard's mouth ever since he started holding his breath four years ago.

Mrs. Morrison is regarded as a national oracle. The *Washington Post* says she gets "more requests to lecture, to read, to be interviewed, to participate in panels and attend conferences, to receive honorary degrees and serve on government commissions, than could be dealt with by a whole shelf of writers." *60 Minutes* devoted a segment to her, and her novel *Beloved* will be released as a movie this fall, produced by Oprah Winfrey, who says she carried the book around "like it was the Bible" during filming. In feature articles she is invari-

Mr. Klinghoffer is NR*'s literary editor.*

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ably described as "majestic" or "regal," a recognition of her status as the Queen of American Letters.

The novel at the center of this latest round of critical breathholding and levitating is called *Paradise*. It takes place in a fictional all-black township, Ruby, Oklahoma, where the residents are both proud and beautiful, as the author repeatedly tells us: "blue-black people, tall and graceful," "all of them were handsome, some exceptionally so," "these outrageously beautiful, flawed, and proud people." The beauty and the pride, however, are disrupted by the action taken by several of the town fathers against a group of women squatting in an old mansion nearby. They storm the place one morning with the intention of shooting everybody inside. As the novel begins these local patriarchs have just arrived, and at the end they start shooting. In between, we have a series of flashbacks on how the women got there in the first place.

Lunatics and senile people will introduce names and references to events into their conversations without wondering whether their interlocutor is familiar with any of them. Though Toni Morrison is no lunatic, nor at 66 years old has she gone senile, she often writes that way.

One of her favorite techniques is to launch into a description of an event as if the reader already knew the dramatis personae, what actually happened, and what precipitated it. For instance: "So she [Seneca, one of the women in the mansion] had done her best to please, even if the Bible turned out to be heavier than the shoes. Like all first offenders, he wanted both right away. Seneca had no trouble with the size-11 Adidas, but Preston, Indiana, didn't sport bookstores, religious or regular." This is the first time "he," the Bible, the shoes, or Preston, Indiana, has made an appearance in the novel.

In this instance at least Mrs. Morrison later fills us in. Elsewhere she seems to have a narrative playing in her head which she vaguely alludes to but otherwise keeps secret. She'll mention "the crazy black woman ruining the Christmas carols" or certain "voices" that "pack the rafters" in the basement of the mansion, and never tell you whom or what either refers to. Elsewhere she's just completely incomprehensible: "In that holy hollow between sighting and following through, could grace slip through?" Uh, maybe.

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A Demilitarized Palestinian State

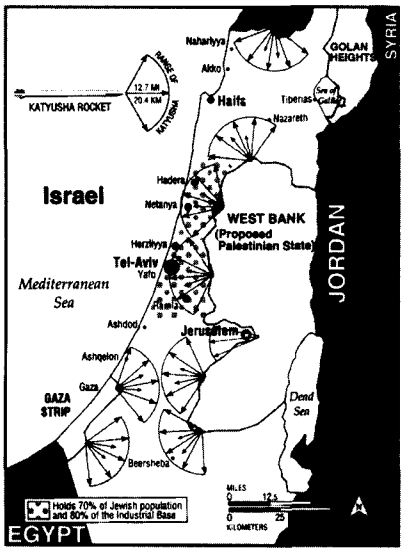
Should Israel, should the world, rely on it?

Even those most sanguine about the current peace negotiations are agreed that the Palestinian entity to be founded should be demilitarized. A demilitarized "West Bank" and Gaza Strip, it is believed, would do away with any military threat to the state of Israel.

What are the facts?

Israel threatened by enemies. Israel is at peace with Egypt and with Jordan. But Israel is confronted by deadly enemies. Other Arab states are still in a declared or undeclared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, lurks in the background, its foremost military and political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The PLO is a terror organization that has only one purpose: to kill Jews and to destroy the state of Israel. While the latter objective is beyond its reach, it has been most successful in the former. It seems almost incomprehensible that a group as supposedly level-headed as the previous government of Israel would have entered into a "peace agreement" with them. Not surprisingly, events since the famous "handshake" confirm such skepticism. Despite statements to the contrary, the PLO has still not complied with Israel's main requirement, namely that it forswear the clauses in its "covenant" that call for the destruction of Israel. Arafat and his lieutenants continue to make blood-curdling speeches to the Arab public, in which they re-assert their old goal of destroying Israel in "stages."



A Palestinian state—demilitarized?

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it. But mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't really be required. The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyusha rockets, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids against Israel. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would literally dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders, which would be increased from 40 miles in length to over 200 miles, they would rain destruction over most of Israel. They would cover in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.

The Arabs danced on the roofs of their homes when Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv during the Gulf War. Since the signing of the "peace agreement" they have continued in unrestrained terror and murder against the Jews. Only incurable optimists can believe that an "autonomous" Palestine would wish to become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip—the invasion route since before biblical times—and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies it would make the country indefensible. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges—Israel's proposed new borders—would suffice to neutralize life and industrial and military activity in Israel. But one can expect that the new leaders of Israel clearly understand this danger and that they will not make concessions that will endanger the security of their country.

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Some critics report that they love this opaque quality. In *The New Yorker*, Louis Menand declares: "One reason that these stories are so gripping is that they are hard to understand." And Toni Morrison tells interviewers that she seeks "to provide the places and spaces so that the reader can participate"—as if clearly written novels didn't require reader "participation"—"to have the reader work with the author in the construction of the book." In other words, we are invited to do the job her editor at Knopf chose not to do. But the experience, aesthetic or emotional, of reading a novel is not likely to benefit from the reader's being forced to edit the book as he goes along.

Though Toni Morrison is no lunatic, nor at 66 years old has she gone senile, she often writes that way.

IT would be different if, beneath the jumble of words from "America's Greatest Storyteller," there were actually much of a story. Storytelling requires some care as to motivation, and Mrs. Morrison has claimed to be such a maniac about that element that she "wasted piles of paper" trying to come up with a plausible scenario in which O. J. Simpson could have been moved to murder his wife. As she recalls in her book *Birth of a Nation'hood: Gaze, Script, and Spectacle in the O. J. Simpson Case*, when she couldn't think of single scenario that wasn't egregiously racist, she judged that he must be innocent.

She should have devoted as much energy to her own story's plausibility as to O. J. Simpson's. Thus relations among the women in the mansion improve greatly when the head woman, Consolata, a native of Brazil brought to Oklahoma at age 9 by nuns, suddenly takes up African religion. In pseudo-mystical ceremonies, she leads her housemates in what seem to be recitations of their dreams, during which they lie on the floor naked. Afterward they draw obscene pictures around the room, which is one thing that helps to convince the menfolk of Ruby that they're witches. Why does Consolata do this? Mrs. Morrison doesn't say. Maybe Consolata killed Nicole Simpson.

In her Nobel Prize acceptance address, Mrs. Morrison praised "language" for "its ability to limn the actual, imagined, and possible lives of its speakers, readers, writers. Although its poise is sometimes in displacing experience, it is not a substitute for it"—i.e., language is good because it describes stuff. Mrs. Morrison likes describing things, especially vegetables and the weather. Often she does this well. At other times she'll get so worked up by some pet poeticism that she forgets she's not writing just for her own delectation. One of the mansion ladies says to herself, "You thought we were hot lava and when they broke us down into sand, you ran." But perhaps the prize Morrison phrase is "gobble-gobble love," referring to an adulteress's feeling for her sex partner, whom she bites hard on the lip until he bleeds.

And so on. After turning the first fifty pages, each one seems a little heavier than the one before. What then has motivated so many reviewers to affirm their gobble-gobble love of this book?

If ever there was an occasion to psychoanalyze white liberals, this is it. That black people praise Toni Morrison poses no problem; there's nothing wrong with boosterism. And Mrs. Morrison probably owes her Nobel Prize to it. In January 1988 a committee of 48 black w ers denounced the white literary w for denying her a National Book Awar or Pulitzer Prize. Their comically pompous "open letter" "urgently affirmed" its signers' "rightful and positive authority in the realm of American letters and, in this prideful context, we do raise this tribute." Two months later Mrs. Morrison received the Pulitzer, and in 1993 she got the call from Stockholm.

But whites? Modern liberalism is an alternative morality system where racism is one of the Seven Deadly Sins. So lionizing a black woman writer gives proof of your virtue.

But lionizing a black woman writer who isn't much good—now that's one thrill on top of another. Call it the Burning Bush syndrome. Moses was selected by God for his mission after he turned aside to examine a burning bush in the desert. According to one tradition, other people had also seen the bush but thought nothing of it. But something in the sight struck Moses as extraordinary (there are theories about what) and God knew He had His man, a very special man.

To see the extraordinary in what seems to be ordinary, the great in what appears to be pedestrian, is a mark of greatness. But sometimes a bush is just a bush, no matter how much you wish it were gobble-gobble otherwise. □

Jerry Built

The success of Seinfeld *was an implicit rebuke to PC pieties—and a confirmation of America's unpredictable spirit.*

ROB LONG

HOLLYWOOD

YEARS ago, at lunch with an NBC executive, I happened to mention a promising new series on his network. *The Seinfeld Chronicles,* it was called. It had aired three times in a terrible time slot in the middle of summer—the boneyard, the death trap, the place, in other words, where networks dump their least promising shows.

"Oh, that," he said, with a dismissive swat of his hand. "That show is dead. We shoulda just flushed the money down the john. Woulda been faster."

Nine years and billions of dollars later, *Seinfeld*, as it was renamed, has not only made its eponymous star a centimillionaire, but it has noticeably buoyed the balance sheet of its network, NBC, and that network's owner, Gener-

Mr. Long is a former co-producer of Cheers, *and currently the executive producer of* George & Leo, *airing on CBS.*

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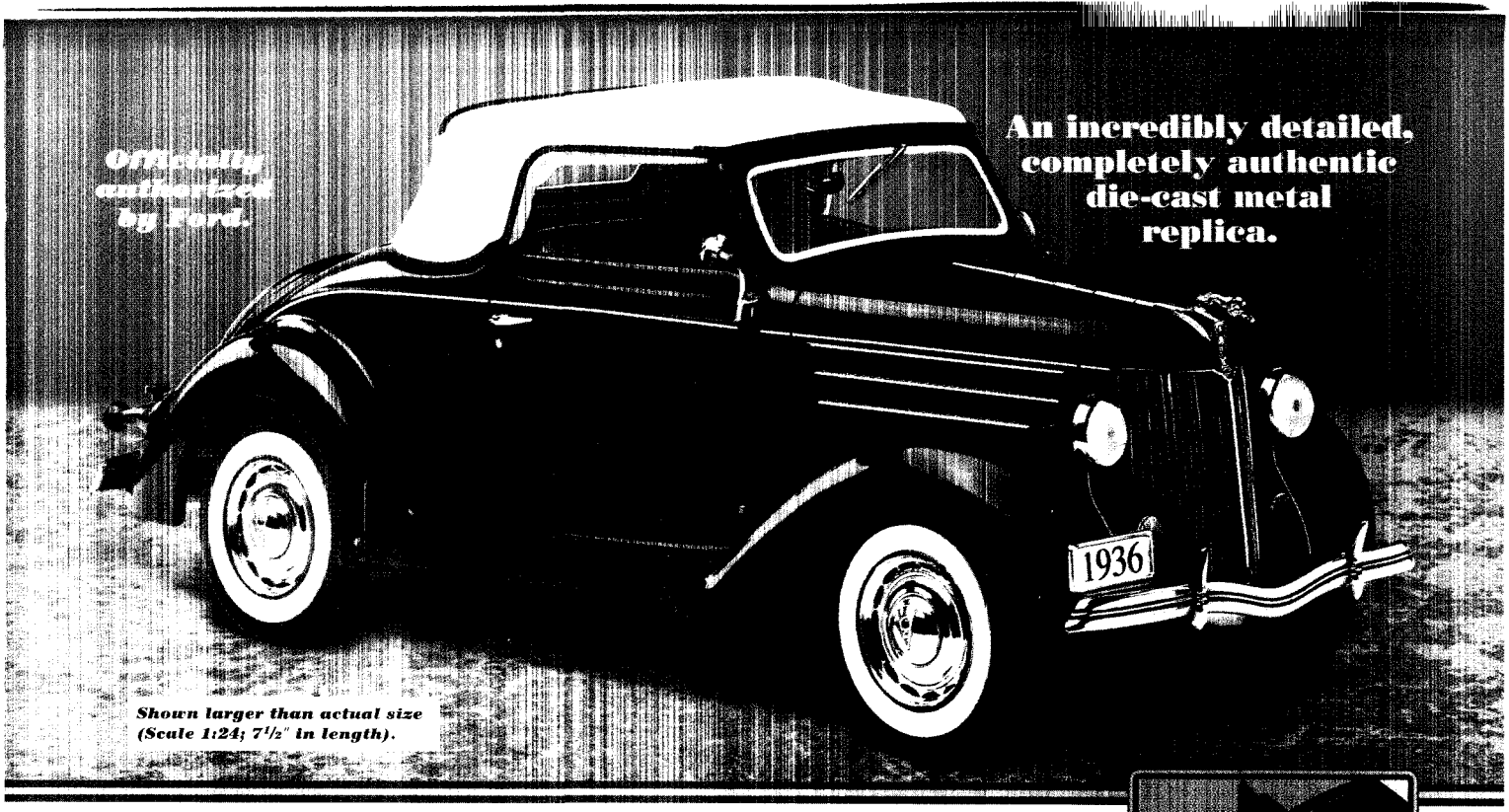

The 1936 Ford Deluxe Cabriolet

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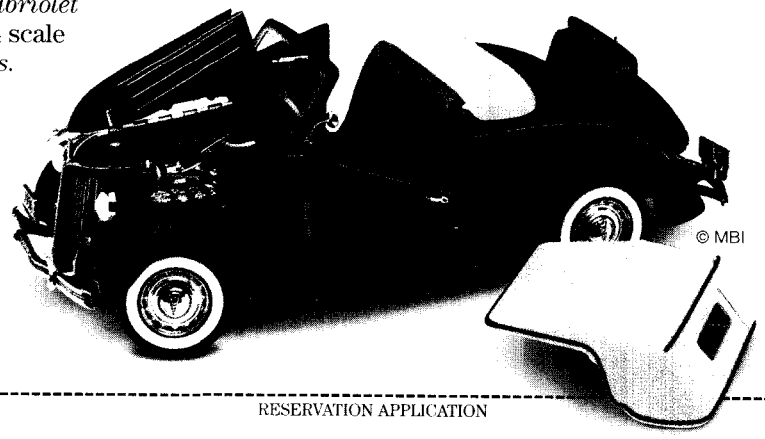
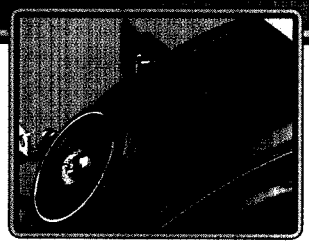
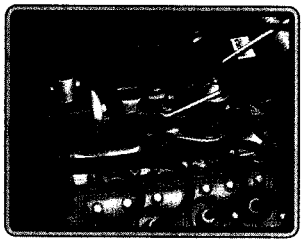
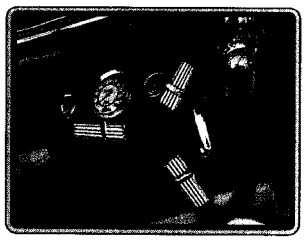




The authentic rumble seat opens and closes smoothly.



The flathead V-8 engine is a miniature masterpiece.



The deluxe interior features an authentic steering wheel and readable dials and gauges.

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al Electric. The executive who dismissed it so haughtily in 1991 was promoted.

That, of course, is standard Hollywood procedure.

Hits aren't created; they're stumbled into. *Seinfeld* is, essentially, a show about four desperately selfish and ludicrously childish friends who behave in a way that can be described, in clinical terms, as sociopathic. They fall in and out of bed with a gaggle of partners, none of whom measure up, and spend a good portion of each episode in a local coffee shop, kvetching. Who could like these people? Who would want to have them as friends? They wear life like an itchy sweater—grumbling, grouchy, and always trying to wiggle out of responsibility.

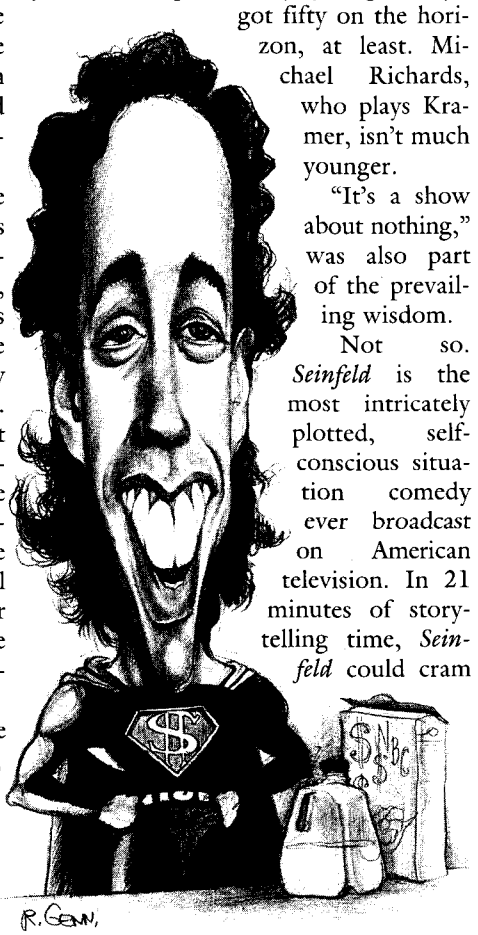
The true legacy of the Sixties wasn't music or intoxicants, it was piety—insufferable, caring, toasty-warm piety.

The show is also a pretty smutty little half-hour, which is one of the reasons conservatives are uneasy about it. Conservatives have a hard time with smut, sadly. They associate it with the excesses of the 1960s and 1970s—young people grooving on sex and drugs and tinny music, bad haircuts, that sort of thing. But the true legacy of those years wasn't music or intoxicants, it was piety. Insufferable, caring, toasty-warm piety. The adjective "nurturing" to describe a relationship between adults; the phrase "handicapped"; the smoothing out of all the rough edges of life—"challenged" for slow, "homeless" for alcoholic, "white wine" for bourbon-rocks, and "life partner" for . . . well, you know.

Seinfeld is gleefully free of cant. There are no messages, positive or otherwise, delivered in an episode except the only one that matters: Laugh. Enjoy. And tune in next week. We are the kings; they are the clowns. Implicit in the series is the understanding that our moral and spiritual life is our own affair. Jerry and friends are strictly for laughs.

The most revolutionary aspect of *Seinfeld* was how easily it confounded the prevailing wisdom. What you need to have a hit, the networks will tell anyone who listens, is a core group of likable characters. They can't be mean or caustic. They need to love one another. They need to be the kind of people the audience can rely on. They cannot be, in other words, the cast of *Seinfeld*. (Early on in the series, the rumor goes, an NBC executive suggested that Jerry get engaged to Elaine, his platonic friend played by Julia Louis-Dreyfus. "What you need here," he is reported as saying, "is a reason to care about these characters. Otherwise, the show will die. No one will watch." He has also, presumably, been promoted and given a large raise.)

The year the show broke out and became a certified smash, Hollywood flew into a frenzy of copy-cat development. "Get me young people talking," went the morning line. And so the following autumn, a dozen or so young-people-talking series went on the air. Most were canceled in a few weeks. It escaped attention that the cast of *Seinfeld* wasn't particularly young—Jerry's got fifty on the horizon, at least. Michael Richards, who plays Kramer, isn't much younger.



"It's a show about nothing," was also part of the prevailing wisdom.

Not so. *Seinfeld* is the most intricately plotted, self-conscious situation comedy ever broadcast on American television. In 21 minutes of story-telling time, *Seinfeld* could cram twenty or more scenes, some barely five seconds long, to keep the story moving.

They were wrong when they said it wouldn't work, and they're wrong when they try to explain why it does. This, too, should cheer conservatives. The market-tested, focus-grouped, top-down, bureaucratically administered conventional wisdom was spectacularly mistaken. *Seinfeld* is a plot-heavy show about unlikable adults in their forties. If you pitched it to a network today, they wouldn't even offer you coffee.

WHY, then, does it work? Why is Jerry Seinfeld, comedian, richer than Jack Welch, corporate titan? Perhaps because there is something in the American spirit that loves a misfit. Perhaps because *Seinfeld* once produced an episode in which the central characters disrupted the life of a handicapped—and insufferable—boy. Perhaps because after years of pious liberal nonsense, the American viewing public relished the naughty pleasure of apolitical laughter. *Seinfeld* isn't a show about nothing; it's a show about nothing pompous.

In one episode, a local reporter mistakes Jerry and George's bickering friendship for a longstanding homosexual marriage. Jerry and George are horrified. A dozen or so times during the episode, they proclaim their heterosexuality. "We're not gay!" they shout, followed quickly by a robotic, "not that there's anything wrong with it." That, in a nutshell, is the average American's typical response to homosexuality: "I'm not, but if you are, well, what the hell can I do about it, anyway?"

The American character is made up of equal parts preacher, bartender, and Huckleberry Finn. We are a cynical, maudlin, gluttonous, parsimonious, practical, extravagant people—sometimes all in the same day. We should savor these contradictions, if for no other reason than because they terrify the rest of the world. Europeans, especially, are bewildered by us.

"How on earth," a French critic once asked me, "can a country so religious and conservative support a show like *The X Files*?"

I shrugged. "We like monster movies," I said.

"But *The X Files* is so much more," he protested.

"Actually," I replied, "it's so much less."

When a show like *Seinfeld* slips through the cracks and becomes a hit, it reinforces our unpredictable, iconoclastic spirit. Here, finally, is the real reason why conservatives should lament the passing of *Seinfeld*: no episode ever ended in a hug. □

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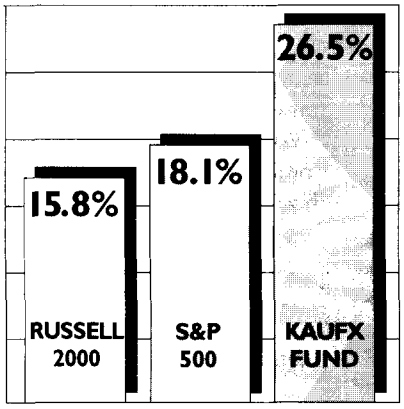

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IN THE TANK

Only half of our soldiers think the principal mission of the Army is to fight ♦ Direct & indirect military expenditures on day care have tripled over the last decade ♦ The Army just completed its worst recruiting year since 1979 ♦ What is wrong with the U.S. military?

Hollow to the Corps

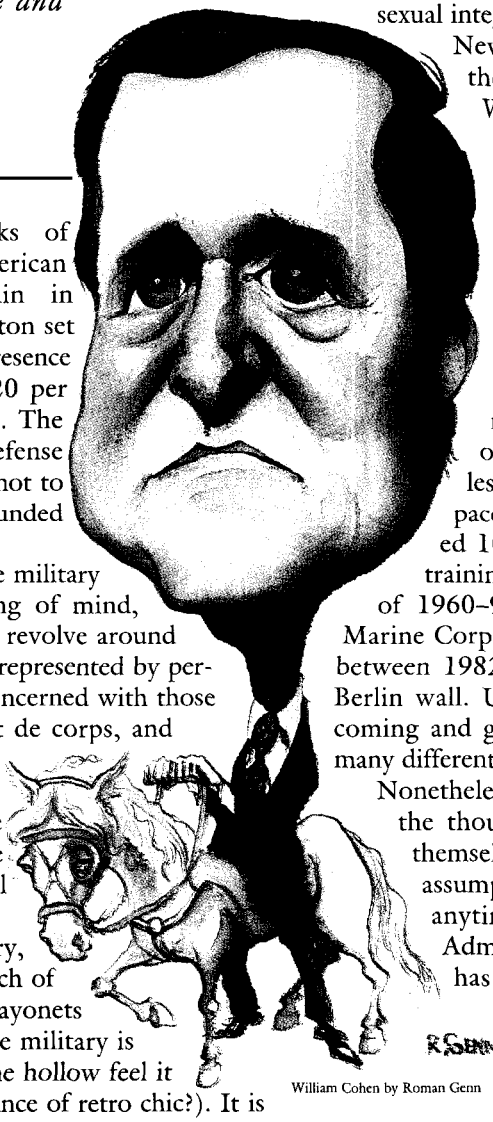
The President is relentlessly shrinking the Armed Forces, while thinking of more and more things for them to do.

JOHN HILLEN

WITHIN a few weeks of announcing that American soldiers would remain in Bosnia indefinitely, President Clinton set forth a plan to reinforce the U.S. presence overseas, increasing funding by 20 per cent and personnel by even more. The problem for Secretary of Defense William Cohen? The windfall went not to our shrunken, strained, and underfunded military, but to the Peace Corps.

Like many other institutions, the military is a trinitarian structure consisting of mind, body, and soul. Issues of the mind revolve around strategy and doctrine. The body is represented by personnel and matériel. The soul is concerned with those intangible issues of morale, esprit de corps, and culture that have proved so consequential in the history of warfare. As Patton remarked, "It is not the sharpness of the bayonet but the gleam in the attacker's eye that will break the enemy line."

Unfortunately, in today's military, the putative attackers have lost much of the gleam in their eye, and their bayonets aren't particularly sharp either. The military is beginning once again to take on the hollow feel it had in the 1970s (yet another instance of retro chic?). It is caught in a downward spiral continuously exacerbated by a national-security strategy that is at once an abstraction and a fabrication, a funding and readiness crisis that steadily eats away at the ability of our forces to carry out missions more challenging than peacekeeping, and a cultural imbroglio over issues of identity, institutional ethos, and sexual integration. Small wonder that few have joined Newt Gingrich in proposing to shift some of the possible budget surplus to the military. Who wants to throw good money after bad?



William Cohen by Roman Genn

The U.S. now offers the world a grand strategy that is, in essence, a gigantic bluff. With a force shrunk by some 40 per cent over the past seven years, America promises to lead the defense of five separate regions of the world, be prepared to defeat both Iraq and North Korea handily at almost the same time, and take on most of the peacekeeping and humanitarian relief tasks that arise. The immediate result of the chirpy strategy of "doing more with less" is a 300 to 400 per cent increase in the pace of operations. The Army, which conducted 10 "operational events" outside of normal training and alliance commitments in the period of 1960–91, has conducted 26 since 1991. The Marine Corps undertook 15 "contingency operations" between 1982 and 1989 and 62 since the fall of the Berlin wall. Units of all the services meet themselves coming and going in a frenetic drive to carry out the many different tasks of U.S. strategy.

Nonetheless, a bluff is not a bluff until it is called—the thought with which our strategists comfort themselves. And U.S. strategy rests on the fragile assumption that nothing too serious will happen anytime soon—at least, not during this Administration. Short-term tactical planning has reached cynical heights. The President's official national-security strategy of "Engagement and Enlargement"—a therapeutic document described as "pabulum" by Johns Hopkins University Professor Eliot Cohen—offers an insight into Clintonian thinking. "Diplomacy is our first line of defense against threats to national and international security," it reads. So much for

Mr. Hillen is the Olin Fellow for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, and an NR *contributing editor.*

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The Bermuda Triangle-Sun

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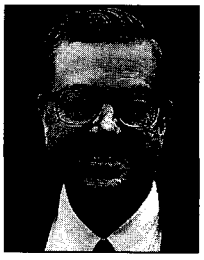

John Leo

Norman Podhoretz

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Rich Lowry

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Kate O'Beirne

John O'Sullivan

William Rusher

By SANDI BEECH
NR *Cruise Correspondent*

NEW YORK, Jan. 22—The ***National Review 1998 Bermuda Cruise*** is still over four months away—so how can it be "crunch time" already?

The answer is, simply, supply and demand. With the economy humming, with disposable cash everywhere, with "cruising" a hot vacation choice, with Bermuda a just-as-hot travel destination, it should come as no surprise that Celebrity Cruises's MV *Zenith*—the sparkling luxury ship that will be the home to the *NR* Bermuda cruise this May 23–30—is already on the brink of selling out.

Fortunately, *NR* has reserved a block of staterooms for the May voyage. Unfortunately—for those who have put off joining *NR*'s editors and celebrity guests for seven spectacular days of sun, conservative talk, and luxury cruising—the "lock" on that space will expire in a few weeks.

"That means," said one *NR* official, "the space will be open to anyone. And I've heard that Celebrity is already selling some of that space in anticipation that we won't beat the deadline."

With only 80 cabins left in *NR*'s hold, and they're going very fast, late-planning travelers who eventually get around to placing a reservation for the ***National Review 1998 Bermuda Cruise***—even if it's done two months before the sail date—will be shut out.

As one would expect, given the incredible program and guests that will be on the cruise. Conservative luminaries who will be piped aboard on May 23rd include Judge **Robert Bork**, former *Commentary* Editor **Norman Podhoretz**, authors **Dinesh D'Souza** and **Midge Decter**, California "Propostion 209" champion **Ward Connerly**, *U.S. News & World Report* columnist **John Leo**, syndicated columnists **Mona Charen** and **William Rusher**, and Media Research Center founder **Brent Bozell**.

They'll be joining *NR* Editor **Rich Lowry**, Editor-at-Large **John O'Sullivan**, and Washington Editor **Kate O'Beirne** to discuss the two issues (at four exclusive seminars) which raise conservative passion: media bias and political correctness.

In addition to the seminars, the cruise will feature exclusive cocktail parties and an *NR* cruise tradition: late-night poolside "smokers" featuring classic *H. Upmann* cigars and top-shelf cognac.

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Until next time, this has been Sandi Beech, *NR* Cruise Correspondent, for *The Bermuda Triangle-Sun*.

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deterrence. Thus, as in the recent stand-off with Iraq, Madeleine Albright and her black Stetson will be dispatched to bring peace in our time, and the military can be left to the important business of ethnic reconciliation in the Balkans. It is a strategy that assumes the triumph of good intentions whenever the U.S. encounters a potential adversary.

This approach belies some fundamental dicta that four thousand years of strategic history have given us. First, the credibility of a policy of deterrence lies in the ability of the deterring force to visit powerful destruction upon a possible enemy. Second, as Lady Thatcher is always quick to point out, it behooves a great power to prepare for the worst. And third, no great power ever remained so by showing what Jonathan Clarke calls "an instinct for the capillaries."

THE continued truculence of Saddam Hussein highlights the precipitous erosion of the U.S. military deterrent. Our Armed Forces could not replicate the Desert Storm force today. They couldn't come even close. In 1998, almost all the active Army's heavy-tank and armored-cavalry units outside of Korea and Bosnia would have to go to the Persian Gulf in order to equal the fighting power of America's VII Corps in 1991. And VII Corps was only one of three American corps engaged in Desert Storm. In October of 1990, before General Norman Schwarzkopf had VII Corps, the best attack plan he could come up with was the infamous "Hey diddle diddle, straight up the middle" assault. The additional American forces sent to him in the late fall of 1990 allowed for the unprecedented boldness of the "left hook" and proved again the truth of the old Trotskyist expression that quantity has a quality all its own.

The fact is that the United States has not had President Clinton's "two major regional conflicts" force since 1991, if then. The President and his strategic advisors (by the way, for the first time this group of top civilian officials and their deputies includes not one who has worn a uniform) aren't worried. Congressman Floyd Spence (R., S.C.), the chairman of the House National Security Committee, recently wrote to the Pentagon asking exactly how a small and strained military might carry out its stated strategy. The then former Deputy Defense Secretary, John White, replied: "We have an extraordinarily ready force. . . . We took 889 people out of Albania last month without any injuries or any difficulties because the force was ready to do that."

Obviously, one Albanian evacuation does not a great power make. But Clinton officials have chosen to focus resources on whatever grabs their attention while paying mere lip service to the more consequential tasks of national security. Thus the military runs hither and yon pursuing the *crise du jour*—the Army recently announced that it had GIs in a hundred different countries around the globe—steadily eroding its ability to respond successfully to crises

John Hamre, Choirboy

JANUARY 12, 1991, was a dark day for John J. Hamre. That afternoon the Senate voted 52 to 47 in favor of the Gulf War Resolution. "It was a very grim day because I knew what was coming," Hamre says, referring to projections of mass casualties in the Gulf. "I thought that it was frankly going to be worse than I feared," he recalls, "that it was going to be a very, very bad series of days."

John Hamre has never served in the military. He views military spending as, at best, a regrettable necessity. He is a Harvard Divinity School dropout who is at pains to explain to reporters how he is not a pacifist. And he is also the deputy defense secretary, the number-two civilian official in charge of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Mr. Gertz is the defense and national-security correspondent for the Washington Times.

A member of the choir at Washington's Luther Place (formally, the Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church), Hamre was influenced profoundly by the church's radical pastor (now retired), the Rev. John Steinbruck, a former Navy chaplain and outspoken social activist who once tried to get President Reagan to donate leftover food from White House state dinners to the homeless. Hamre notes that the pastor, who was regularly arrested during anti–Vietnam War protests, "wrestled with these same problems that I now wrestle with all the time."

In 1972 Hamre himself spent a year at Harvard Divinity School but gave it up because, as he put it, the church "didn't need another insecure pastor." After receiving a doctorate from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, he went on to spend nearly two decades as a defense-budget specialist who lived and breathed the minutiae of Pentagon spending. During the Gulf War, he worked for Sen. Sam Nunn (D., Ga.), who voted against the Gulf War Resolution. (Hamre denies that he had any influence over Nunn's decision.)

Hamre joined the Clinton Administration in 1993 as the Pentagon comptroller, the chief financial officer for an organization with an annual budget of some $250 billion. As deputy defense secretary, he is now the chief operating officer under Defense Secretary William S. Cohen. Cohen recently described Hamre, 47, as having, among other things, "the divine faith of a minister in the goodness of mankind, which is a remarkable trait to retain after twenty years of being in Washington."

Or just about anywhere else, for that matter. The affable Hamre is well liked by Republicans in Congress. And he has spent the past five years trying to make the Pentagon function more efficiently —for example, reforming problem disbursements in one Pentagon office to save more than $29 billion. But Hamre is not nearly so frugal when it comes to social programs. Three years ago he

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of greater magnitude than Albania's. The ephemeral public support for such tangential operations locks Mr. Clinton's strategists into a vicious circle. In venues such as Haiti and Bosnia, U.S. military engagement is kept at a low cost in lives so as not to excite the kind of public reaction that forced the withdrawal from Somalia. The imperative of caution, however, then ensures that such tepid nation-building exercises will not construct anything lasting. The problem our soldiers' inaction has perpetuated then requires their continued presence. Thus we have prevented a single American life from being taken in combat in Bosnia at the cost of an indefinite commitment (and $8 billion to date).

The eagerness of this Administration to cut personnel and spending while refusing to cut military commitments has left the military intolerably thin. Not only is the force level too small for many missions, but the budget will not support even this inadequate force. Underfunding estimates range from the Congressional Budget Office's $11 billion per year to the $20 billion predicted by several centrist think tanks. Conservatives in Congress have added money to the defense budget for three years running, but much of it has been sunk into strategically useless pork projects.

All the services have suffered from overuse and underfunding in the past three years. The strain on troops and equipment literally wears out the forces, prompting readiness crises, equipment and personnel shortages, curtailed or poorly executed training, a lack of investment in future weapon systems, and severe problems with recruiting, retention, and morale. A sampling of the most recent evidence, amassed in numerous media reports and several congressional investigations, is compelling:

—Even a Navy reduced by some 180 ships in seven years finds it difficult to recruit and retain enough sailors to operate them. The Navy has missed its retention goals four years running. Some ships are undermanned by as much as 25 per cent, especially in key areas: fire controlmen, electronics technicians, sonar operators, intelligence specialists. Naval officers, especially aviators, have left in record numbers; not enough are staying to staff senior positions in the fleet. A *Navy Times* story chalked up the exodus to the pace of operations and to officers' being "discouraged by changes in the culture and by funding and parts shortages."

—The Air Force, although cut from 35 tactical wings to 20 in the past seven years, has similar personnel problems. Repeated deployments have prompted a mass departure of pilots from the service. In 1996, 498 trained pilots quit the force. By September 1997, another 626 had walked. Healthy re-enlistment bonuses have not stemmed the tide; the Air Force's director of military personnel announced that the service would be short at least 350 pilots by later this year. Money targeted for investment in new aircraft or spare parts has been raided to pay for current operations, which portends not only the increased use of current aircraft (some are already flying at twice the recommended rate of use) but also the further postponement of replacements. Most important, perhaps, performance ratings at combat-

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insisted that the *defense* budget continue to include an annual $3 million to buy blankets for the homeless. (Congress eventually killed the program.)

Indeed, Hamre is frank about his belief that dollars spent on defense instead of social programs are a waste—a belief that he proceeds to explain. "I view national defense," he says, "in many ways like an insurance policy: If you get through the year and your house didn't burn down, you wasted your insurance money. Would you have lived for any day during the year without it? No. Do I feel we shouldn't have a military? Hell no. That's not what I think at all." In one recent *Washington Post* interview, Hamre was so worried that his religious views would be misunderstood that he spent nearly four hours explaining them.

ALAS, critics aren't convinced. Frank Gaffney, director of the Center for Security Policy, calls Hamre a "conscientious objector" who is "at the heart of the problems you see with Clinton Administration defense policies." By most accounts, Hamre was instrumental in President Clinton's recent line-item vetoes of several space programs with potential defense applications. And critics complain that the Hamre-led Defense Reform Initiative restructured the Pentagon's nuclear-weapons programs to give more clout to anti-nuclear types.

He also spearheaded an effort to streamline the Office of the Secretary of Defense, an effort some critics have said was used by the Administration to dump a number of career Pentagon officials who were viewed as politically out of tune. Andrew Marshall, the longtime head of the Pentagon's Net Assessment Office, was moved to the National Defense University; the intelligence shop is being revamped; and the Technology Transfer Office is being gutted.

At the very least, Hamre brings to his job qualities not typically associated with senior defense officials. He set off a minor controversy at West Point last year when he asked to deliver a sermon to cadets in the academy's chapel. His request was misinterpreted as an order for the corps to assemble for his talk. The sermon was about Hamre's personal journey, as he puts it, from "Bibles to bullets," and the responsibilities that come with it. He plans to deliver similar homilies at the two other service academies.

Comments one Senate defense aide and former West Pointer: "The Pentagon is not the place to reconcile your religious faith. The mission of DoD is to be prepared to deter aggressors and, if that fails, to hunt them down and kill them. It's that simple. The Pentagon is no place for questioning the morality of taking the steps necessary for doing the job, and if John Hamre is wasting even a single second of his life doing that, no matter how decent a person he is, he is letting his own personal doubts take away from the very serious job he has."

For his part, Hamre is adamant that he understands the need for deterrence in a fallen world. "I don't believe," he says, "that you can counter evil people with, frankly, pacifistic actions." It's just that Hamre isn't particularly comfortable with any other kind of actions. Which makes him right at home in an Administration that never would have darkened that day back in 1991 with the rumblings of war. —BILL GERTZ

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training centers have shown that despite the increased "seat time" that pilots get in the many new deployments, combat skills have eroded significantly.

—The Army too has witnessed a decline in combat skills that service officials scramble madly to put their own spin on. Reduced money for training has forced a scaling back of live-fire training and of unit rotations through the national training center in the California desert. Units that make it to the training center often face manning problems and a shortage of pre-rotation training that make for steadily deteriorating performances. A recent Senate investigation revealed that infantry units reporting for their training rotation often had a 50 per cent shortage; other specialties had even greater shortages. In moves reminiscent of the hollow Army of the 1970s, some battalions have "zeroed out" one of three infantry squads in order to man fully the remaining two. A House National Security Committee report found five battalions of infantry undermanned; it also found 134 tank crews and 199 armored-vehicle crews that were undermanned or unqualified.

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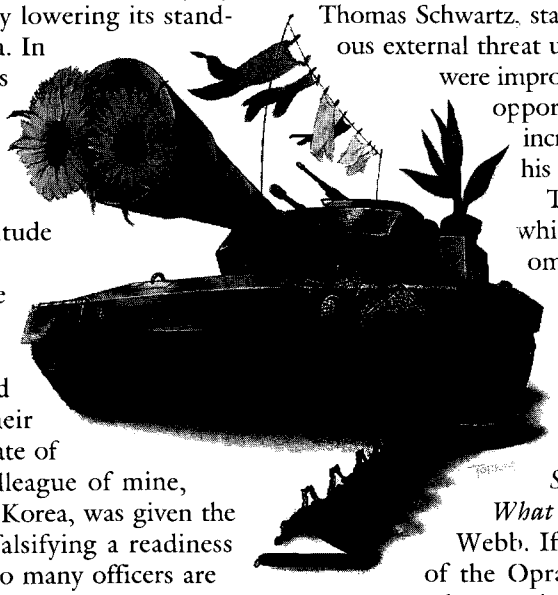
While at least one high Army officer—Lt. Gen. Jay Garner—has publicly admitted that "we have a creeping hollowness" in the force, the official line is one of qualified denial. Although the Army requires approximately 520,000 soldiers to staff its force structure, a DoD-mandated cut to a ceiling of 480,000 has prompted no internal reorganization. And future prospects are not good. The Army has just concluded its worst recruiting year since 1979. Only by revising its goals and comprehensively lowering its standards did the Army make its final quota. In doing so, it garnered the ignominious distinction of coming in last among the services on two important measures of recruit quality: the percentage of recruits with a high-school diploma and the average military-aptitude test scores.



The obvious dichotomy between the truth in the field and the story put forth by the brass is itself eroding morale. Some junior officers are told by superiors what to annotate on their readiness reports, regardless of the state of affairs in their unit. One former colleague of mine, commanding an aviation company in Korea, was given the choice of resigning his position or falsifying a readiness report—a situation with which far too many officers are familiar. Independent military newspapers act almost as confessionals, with anonymous letters attesting to the enforced fabrications in unit-status reports. A gag order issued last August by Louis Finch, the deputy undersecretary of defense for readiness, only reinforced the notion that the truth was being squelched. All this contributes to a deeper hollowness of spirit in today's fragile military.

THE issues that trouble the soul of the military can best be summed up as an institutional identity crisis. Strategically, there is confusion about enemies and missions. Those told to be prepared to give their lives for the common defense find themselves asking against whom, where, and for what. Is it any wonder that a recent survey showed that only one-third of the Army's women and just over half its men believe that the principal mission of the Army is to fight and win in combat? More damning, the same survey found that only 37 per cent of men and one-quarter of women in the Army would "feel good about going to war with [their] company."

The military also lacks a social sense of self. The military ethos and culture is continuously pressed to change in order to conform with the mores of present-day society as interpreted by Clinton Administration appointees. Some ground has been won back in this area recently, with the sensible conclusions of the Kassebaum–Baker commission on sexually integrated training and the outrage over the Marine-bashing comments of now former Assistant Secretary of the Army Sara Lister. But these reactions may merely slow the military's march away from common sense. Military leaders and GOP politicians still focus more on having the military capitulate in the gender wars than on preparing for the real ones. The pandering to the feminist lobby is all the more extraordinary given recent public outrage over the softness of sexually integrated boot camp. Don't count on the other services moving toward the Marines Corps' segregated-training model. During stump speeches to troops, a three-star Army general commanding one of America's most powerful combat corps, Lt. Gen. Thomas Schwartz, stated that because there was no serious external threat until 2020, his short-term priorities were improving family support, creating better opportunities for single soldiers, and increasing the proportion of women in his corps from 12 to 17 per cent.

The Army Chief of Staff, meanwhile, recently had the chance to recommend some professional reading in an e-mail message to his officers. Despite all the excellent military history that has been written recently, by Stephen Ambrose and others, what the Chief recommended was *Step Forward: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, What You Need to Know* by Susan L. Webb. If the next war is fought on the set of the Oprah Winfrey show, then we are a sure bet to win. It won't be, of course. But that's a contingency that the new military, increasingly hollow in every sense of the word, would prefer to ignore. □

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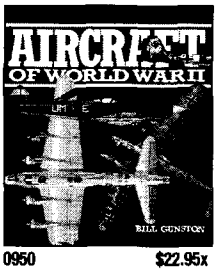

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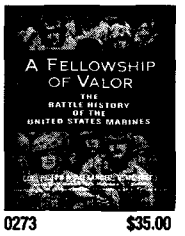

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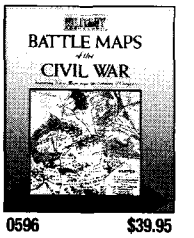

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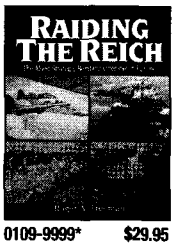

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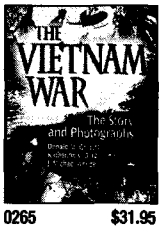

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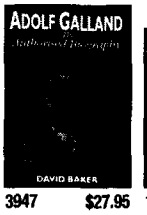

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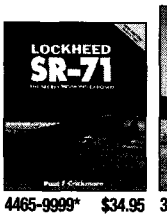

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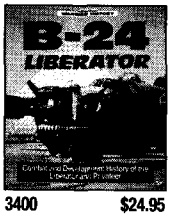

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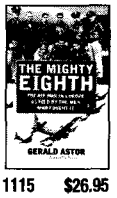

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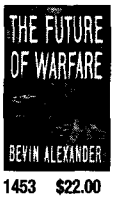

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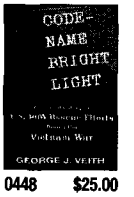

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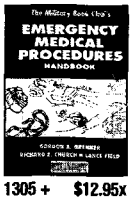

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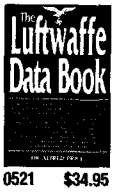

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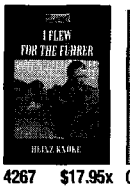

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Fighting Families

The military's focus on child care corrupts families—and the national defense.

ALLAN CARLSON

THE star panelist at Hillary Clinton's October White House Conference on Child Care actually wore two on each shoulder. Maj. Gen. John G. Meyer Jr., until recently commander of the U.S. Army's Community and Family Support Center, captivated an audience of enthusiasts for institutional child care with tales of military success in the nursery. Under his leadership, 85 per cent of the child-care centers run under the Army's Child Development Program had received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, compared to the national average of only 5 per cent.

"Commitment, standards, and funding," the general declared, were the lessons offered by the military experience. Basking in the glow of the First Lady's personal praise, he expanded on the new military gospel of social parenting. "Child care is critical to the Department of Defense's bottom line," Gen. Meyer said. He added: "Supporting the care and development of children is a responsibility the military readily assumes in exchange for the loyalty of their parents in uniform."

Meyer emphasized the "new reality" of America's fighting forces: that the 1.4 million active-duty volunteers had 1.3 million children under age 18, 345,000 of whom were under age 3; that 60 per cent of this force was married; and that 68 per cent of the spouses were employed outside the home. Indeed, nearly 10 per cent of this force consists of "service couples," with both husband and wife in uniform.

Accordingly, "quality child developmental care" has become, in the words of the 1987 Army Family Action Plan, "a crucial [military] program." While the number of combat divisions has been slashed by half over the last decade, direct and indirect military expenditures for child care have tripled. Among the three services, eight hundred child-care centers—a growing number of which are open 24 hours a day—tend over 200,000 tykes, making the U.S. Department of Defense the nation's largest child-care system.

The Department of Health and Human Services now has nothing on the Department of Defense. Indeed, the Clinton Administration recently ordered the military to proselytize civilians on behalf of safe, affordable, and accessible child care. "I believe that the military has important lessons to share with the rest of the Nation on how to improve the quality of child care for all of our Nation's children," the President explained in his April 1997 directive.

Forget fixing bayonets; try changing diapers. In a Rose Garden conversation over punch and cookies at that Conference on Child Care, I asked the Army's new Child Development commander if his "warm fuzzy" assignment might hurt his career. The tall, lean, highly decorated Airborne Ranger assured me that a focus on "the Army family" and child care was, in fact, now the preferred path for promotion and career success.

This not only diverts the military from what obviously should be its primary task—defending the nation—but also puts it in the business of social engineering. In this area, it isn't the broader culture assaulting the values of the military, but the other way around. Since the first Army Family Action Plan, issued ominously in 1984 ("The Year of the Army Family"), the Army's focus has been on dissolving real, autonomous families and blending the human parts into "The Total Army Family," a notion that tacitly assumes the primacy of post-family or non-family bonds.

Some aspects of the Total Army Family appear traditional. For example, a range of family entitlements—including housing subsidies, health care, and "high quality" child care—encourages early marriage and/or childbearing. But the high rate of early marriage in the military is matched by abnormally high rates of family turmoil and divorce. Moreover, the birth of children in the military increasingly occurs outside the bonds of matrimony, with "the Total Army Family" assuming the roles of both breadwinner and caregiver for the unmarried service mom and her children. Up to 40 per cent of military pregnancies occur among the unmarried. Furthermore, because these unwed soldiers, sailors, and aviators are excused from hard duty and receive preferred access to medical care, education, and housing—without even having to identify the father(s) of their children—the military goes beyond simple moral neutrality and actually subsidizes illegitimacy.

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In sum, present-day military families are neither autonomous nor strong, the true measures of family health. They are heavily dependent on special subsidies. And while our uniformed women, whether unmarried or in fragile formal liaisons, do reproduce, they increasingly give their children over to a system of collectivized child-rearing.

The logical end of this system is a kind of militarized socialism. In a 1978 article for the journal *Armed Forces and Society*, Harvard University's M. D. Feld identified the change sweeping through the Armed Forces. The services were less and less "a power-laden patriotic symbol" and instrument of war, and more and more technocratic institu-

Mr. Carlson is president of the Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society in Rockford, Illinois. He was a Reagan appointee to the National Commission on Children.

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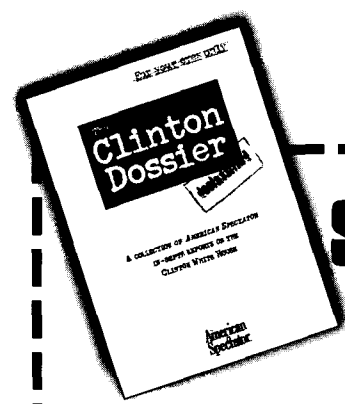

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tions guided by intellectual elites in the pursuit of egalitarian ends: "One consequence of the contemporary fusion of the notions of national security and national welfare has been the sensible eradication of the conceptual distinction between the nation-in-arms and the nation at peace. The notion of total mobilization as . . . [a] wartime measure is being replaced by the model of the permanently mobilized state: a state mobilized not for reasons of war but in order to allocate its resources in the fullest and most rational manner possible."

How can we avoid this vision, with its dreadful consequences for both society and the military? There are two models. The first prevailed from 1948 to 1970, when a workable fusion of traditional family life and military service emerged. Officers' wives normally were full-time homemakers, able to care for their children, while a partially conscripted force and less attractive "family" benefits reduced the dependency burden among enlisted ranks. This was undone as feminism and careerism displaced patriotism and duty as the military's guiding ideologies.

The other option would entail a more fundamental revision. An earlier and more stable tradition, operative from 1775 through 1947, assumed that America's standing military forces would be a small, professional, elite corps, largely bachelor in composition. Hence, there would be fewer babies cooing and crying in the background, and no need for huge day-care expenditures and a Family Action Plan to go along with them. This force would be backed in times of crisis by "well regulated" militias or a National Guard composed (in Woodrow Wilson's words) of "a citizenry trained and accustomed to arms."

Either model could still work today—and, at least, leave the social engineering to Donna Shalala. □

Defense Matters

The world is still full of dangers, but there are steps we can take to make it safer.

NEWT GINGRICH

IT is tempting to assume that we now face no serious threats to our national security. In fact, we face myriad dangers, different from and more complex than the threat posed by the old Soviet Union. Potential adversaries still include large states with powerful militaries whose future intentions are unknown (Russia and China); they also include rogue states such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and Libya, and non-state players such as drug cartels, crime syndicates, terrorist groups, and extremist cults.

Many of these non-traditional actors represent narrow political, cultural, or social forces. They don't play by the old rules and are likely to behave far more recklessly than the traditional nation-state. A Saddam Hussein or a drug lord with a biological weapon in many ways poses a far more formidable threat than Khrushchev or Brezhnev ever did. In the information age, these players have access to technology that will allow them speedily to acquire alarming weapons capabilities. We face a transformed world where being unprepared may mean our national ruin.

This altered calculus presents several new challenges which the nation—and the Republican Party—must meet head on. First, we must acknowledge the changes in the world and adjust our thinking accordingly. The last overhaul of our national-security architecture took place more than fifty years ago. Emerging threats, including drugs and terrorism, are slipping through widening cracks in an aging bureaucratic infrastructure, wholly inadequate for formulating a coherent national-security policy.

So, a priority must be placed on long-overdue Pentagon reform. The recent National Defense Panel report and Secretary Cohen's own internal review confirm the repeated calls by House National Security Committee Chairman Floyd Spence for reforming the Pentagon's bloated bureaucracy and its obsolete business practices.

Second, I advocate spending any savings from Pentagon reform on defense modernization. And even more must be done. Over the next five years, we should increase defense spending beyond the levels in the budget agreement. To do this, I would support both using surplus funds in the budget and renegotiating the agreement. Our forces are not getting sufficient training, equipment modernization, and the other support necessary for them to defend America or our interests around the globe.

For too long our military has lived off Reagan's defense buildup. As the Gulf War illustrated, advanced technology is now synonymous with battlefield dominance. To deter potential opponents from threatening our interests and, if necessary, to defeat them on the battlefield of tomorrow, we need a more robust investment in defense today.

Third, we must rebuild a weakened intelligence community. Its support is essential to both policymakers and warriors. Human intelligence, technical intelligence, and analytical prowess are integral to deterring conflict and waging war. The Clinton Administration's neglect of—even hostility toward—intelligence has dangerously withered these critical capabilities. Many talented people—the keystone of effective intelligence—have been forced into early retirement. This erosion must be reversed through increased investment and attention.

Last, but not least, the need for American leadership in the world must never be forgotten. In the end, freedom and prosperity will suffer everywhere—including here at home—if America does not step up to these challenges and decisively lead the world into the next century. □

Mr. Gingrich is Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

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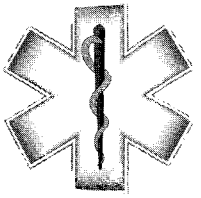

Bethesda Naval Hospital

CONFIDENTIAL

Exam Report
January 17, 1998
Patient: Male, middle-aged
Lab work attached

Doctor's Notes:

The patient came to us last week, requesting an immediate complete physical exam, in preparation for a bid to become NASA's next "guest" astronaut. The patient, clearly alarmed that John Glenn is scheduled to return to space, wants to begin a crash course of physical and mental conditioning. He wants to be in outer space "as soon as possible, but no later than the New Hampshire primary." The patient has not, to my knowledge, ever traveled in space, though he speaks of it a great deal and seems to have detailed knowledge of its requirements and benefits.

Stress Level:

The patient is currently serving as Vice President of the United States, and therefore stress level is at a minimum. Nevertheless, he complains of vague aches and pains—all of which suggest some degree of stress. When asked to be more specific about his pains, the patient muttered, "So now my credibility is being questioned." (See below: "Psychological profile.")

Cardio Fitness/Strength:

The treadmill test was quickly performed. The patient has excellent cardio fitness. In fact, he had to be coaxed off. He also did well with the strength tests, although his explosive strength (i.e., lifting, pulling, pushing) wasn't nearly as advanced as his tensile strength (i.e., holding, squeezing) "I'm on the phone a lot," he offered by way of explanation.

"You certainly must be," I replied. "You must make hundreds of phone calls a day to develop that kind of tensile strength."

The patient glowered. "Everybody's a comedian," he snarled. (See below: "Psychological profile.")

Reflexes:

The patient appears to have enormously slow reflexes. Brain impulses travel quite slowly, judging by his speech pattern.

Routine physical reflex tests (the standard hammer/knee test) revealed a curious tic. When one of his knees was tapped by the reflex hammer, the patient's leg would remain completely still. Then, a few moments later, he would search my face, then slowly move one leg or the other—it often didn't correspond to the knee that had been tapped.

When questioned about this curious phenomenon, the patient replied, irritably, that he was just trying to "give you what you want." When I told him that I didn't want anything, per se, except for him to do whatever felt natural, he replied, "Yeah, right," rolling his eyes.

After much argument, he finally agreed to submit to the knee reflex test without trying to figure out which leg was the "correct" leg to move. "If you insist," he said, "we'll do this one off the record." I tapped his right knee with the hammer. Slowly, very slowly, his right leg moved in a deliberate arc. "I thought you were just going to react without thinking," I said.

"I did," he replied. (Note: We should look into this.)

General aging:

The patient seems preoccupied by his incipient male pattern baldness. "Like it, Doc?" he kept asking with forced joviality. "Used to be pretty full up there," he would add. His eyeglass prescription also needs to be strengthened.

Prostate:

Exam not performed. Patient refused to "let my doctor act like an independent prosecutor."

Psychological profile:

The patient is very enthusiastic about his potential as an astronaut. "This is just the ticket," he kept repeating, " 'cause I've run out of sick relatives."

Yet one can't help wondering if his enthusiasm is not just the most recent example of an obsession. This doctor personally remembers that when the patient was a U.S. Senator, it was literally impossible to take his temperature without hearing a lecture about the Midgetman missile. Our dermatologist reports that the patient insists on a full exam every six weeks, due to the "continued erosion of the ozone layer."

Conclusion:

Space travel for this particular patient appears redundant. Suggest, however, corrective lenses. While we haven't yet been contacted by NASA as regards this patient, we undoubtedly will be, given his high office. Suggest for reasons of liability denying your recommendation.

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help

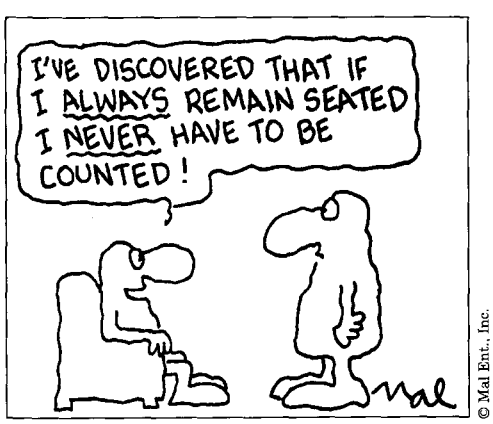
"This one's described as a 'scam-in-progress.'"

"It's that young broker. Are you interested in a totally awesome stock that has a potential to 'rule'?"

Elder

Retired
to temperate
Floridas of reason,
he remembered youth's quick change of season.

—GLORIA A. MAXSON



"Our organizing principle, bottom line, and primary incentive is money. The question is, how can we articulate that in a way which makes it sound as if we're here to serve the public?"

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YES...IT'S A DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENT, BUT LET'S HOLD OFF ON THAT PRESS CONFERENCE — AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER SHEARING SEASON...

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Air Farce

FLORENCE KING

MOST of Kelly Flinn's book reads like an adolescent adventure series, "The Cosmo Girls Go to War," but one passage stands out as a brilliant, if unintentional, example of satirical parody:

> I arrived in Minot in early October: Winter had already begun. . . . To my right, to my left, for miles, I could see only farmland. It was flat. Extremely flat. No hills, no mountains; just plains. The ground was yellow and brown and the crops looked dead. The main road through town was only five miles long. . . . I saw a small college, a big red brick factory called the Sweetheart Bakery, and a large number of railroad tracks. . . . The city still had the feeling of something half-finished. Despite all the wide-open spaces around it, it felt very claustrophobic.

This is Carol Kennicott of *Main Street* arriving in Gopher Prairie, determined to change hearts and minds and anything else that gets in her way to realize her dream of bringing culture and refinement to Midwestern boosters. That Carol was destined to get into a great deal of trouble was obvious to everyone but Carol, and so it was with the equally obtuse Kelly Flinn. If only she had been able to appreciate her resemblance to her literary predecessor she might have done things differently, but her DNA is missing an irony gene and she doesn't seem to have read anything except manuals.

Proud to Be: My Life, the Air Force, the Controversy, by Kelly Flinn (Random House, 259 pp., $23)

Flinn, the baby of her family, has four much older siblings; her two brothers were 14 and 8 when she was born and her two sisters 10 and 11. Apparently she was what is tactfully called a "surprise," but she is blind to the connection between being an unwanted child and her need to push herself into places where she is not wanted. Of the circumstances of her birth she says only, "My role in the family was to be cute."

Anxious to establish her tomboy credentials, she dwells on her days as the pride of the monkey bars and the only girl on the soccer team. In high school she compromised with femininity by being "well-rounded," i.e., majoring in extracurricular activities while still keeping up her grades, though she never tells us what the latter were. Like all Great Girl types she used overscheduled joinerism to simulate popularity; finding herself with no date for the senior prom, she had to ask a boy she met at Space Camp.

Roman Genn

The first thing she saw when she entered the Air Force Academy was a wall inscribed "Bring Me Men." The second was the marble statue of Pegasus, which, male cadets prophesy, will fly off its pedestal when a female cadet graduates a virgin. Flinn was a virgin and wanted to remain one, but she would awaken at night to find her roommate having sex, and once, two men entered their unlocked room and fondled them as they lay in bed. She wanted to file a complaint but her roommate, sounding as complaisant as a tired old streetwalker, said, "It really wasn't so bad."

Flinn went into gender shock. "I so wished that I didn't have to be around men: since my world was 90 per cent male, I was in a state of anxiety all the time." Even worse than the constant sexual tension were the "gross-out contests" in which, to use the only printable example, male cadets drank to get sick and then ate each other's vomit.

Her feminine side wanted to quit but her tomboy side feared the stigma of not being able to take it "like a man." After the fondling incident, a female counselor told her she would lose her fear of men once she learned how to control a sexual situation. She took this to mean she must initiate sex to prove she was aggressive, so she picked a cadet she calls a "male friend" and told him what the counselor had said. He was silent for a moment, then: "Would you like to go out?" On that drab note she was deflowered. Afterward, instead of feeling the usual female regret, she told herself that "by having meaningless, casual sex without a relationship, I'd just, once and for all, become one of the boys."

She spent a summer at Kunsan AFB in South Korea where, desperately seeking that elusive camaraderie (her favorite word), she tagged along on sprees with F-16 pilots. "Every night we went to bars where women danced naked and swung from poles," and got falling-down drunk on *soju*, or Korean moonshine. This time she did not flinch from the gross-out contests.

> Basically, the men vomited and blew chunks off the second-floor balcony of a restaurant. Since I enjoyed going out and drinking hard with the boys, I was quickly integrated into the group and given a nickname of my own, although I did not get sick. Joining comrades named Chunk

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"The pope is driven by his foreboding that the world is heading toward a moral apocalypse."—*Newsweek*

Pope John Paul's preoccupation will come as no surprise to readers of Fr. Vincent Miceli's timeless book, now in its second decade of life. Fr. Miceli keynotes his investigation of the last days with this from the Holy Father:

"We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church."

Fr. Miceli doesn't pretend to know who the Antichrist is, where he'll appear, or when. But he does line up the signs of the times — linking these signs with the prophecies in Daniel, the New Testament, the early Church Fathers — and prophetic modern voices like Newman, Solzhenitsyn, Pius XII. Some of his insights are jolting:

= Six key features of the modern world that correspond alarmingly with apocalyptic prophecy

= Three stages in the evolution of evil as it prepares man to receive and worship Antichrist. How far have we proceeded?

= The Antichrist and the New Christianity. Five marks of the latter, all dissected

= One reliable sign of the Antichrist. Five things we know about him. Will he be different from Satan? One man or many? For answers, Fr. Miceli turns to Scripture and the early Fathers

= How Western — especially American — society's war against religion in public life corresponds to key apocalyptic prophecies

= Abortion: the assault on life by the forerunners of the Antichrist

= Common misconceptions about the Antichrist spread by televangelists and popular books

= To whom does God give the gift of prophecy? How should we look upon modern-day evangelists who claim the gift? Rules for recognizing false prophets

= The Antichrist's precursors: how to identify them

= 10 features of Antichrist's religion, according to Church Fathers. Where will he rise? How he will persecute the Church

= The role of Islam and the Jews in the end times

Fr. Miceli avoids the extravagant speculation that mars many popular books on apocalyptic themes, including some Catholic ones. Which may explain this enthusiastic note from the theologian of the Papal Household, Cardinal L. Ciappi: "The theme is so appropriate ... may it have a large and influential reception."

"In the everlasting Holy War against the Devil, *The Antichrist* is a masterly textbook." —Malcolm Muggeridge

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- Did Christ simply drag the Cross to Calvary, as is typically depicted? Evidence suggests otherwise
- Countless medically accurate details on the Shroud that no medieval artist could have forged, or even known about
- Were Christ's feet nailed separately, or one over the other?
- Why His violent thirst?
- The determining cause of Christ's death: asphyxia after prolonged struggle

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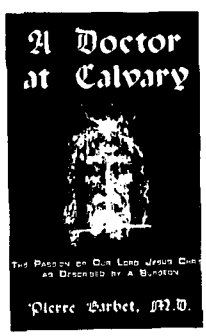

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Nose, Chunk Lips, and Chunk Face, I was called Chunk Tits.

Her Class of '93 had a high female attrition rate due to a gang rape on the athletic field, several "forced sex" incidents, and indecent exposure in parachuting class, but Flinn, taking strength, she says, from Anita Hill, hung on and graduated.

Next came flight school, where she alienated her male classmates. A highlight of the bonding process was choosing the shoulder patch that would identify them as comrades. The men wanted a naked girl with planes flying through her spread legs, but Flinn, taking strength now from castratrix Lorena Bobbitt, suggested "a knife and a cucumber." The Anita Hill case had made the Air Force nervous about obscenity, so the men had to choose an innocuous patch.

Having signaled her womanly delicacy, Flinn now switched signals and played the consummate tomboy. "I picked up a male pilot's jaunty way of walking, talking . . . I talked fast and low. I kept my intonation flat . . . I never wore makeup in uniform; it made me look too much of a woman."

She was ready for combat, so sunk in unintrospective self-absorption that she assumed everyone else agreed with her: "Faced with growing numbers of women in all areas of professional life, Americans were slowly coming to grips with the idea of seeing their daughters held as prisoners of war and young mothers coming home in body bags."

When her request to fly B-52s was granted, she was heralded as the first female bomber pilot and sent to Minot AFB, home of the B-52, to be the official poster girl for the feminist-hounded Air Force. At last her conflicted family dynamic was resolved: now she could be unwanted *and* cute.

North Dakota should call itself the "Aphrodisiac State." Sex was rife at Minot, Flinn says, because there was nothing else to do. As the bleak vastness settled over her, she caught the spirit of prairie bacchanalia and began to realize what she had been missing.

Her first tumble in the tundra was with an enlisted man, Colin Ferguson, whom she met when she gave what she calls a wine-tasting party. "People were staggering around the house drunk and flopped out all over the lawn." She didn't think she was fraternizing with Ferguson because "I didn't use rank to get him into bed. He was so drunk he just sort of oozed in."

The rest of the book consists of a retelling of her well-publicized downfall. The familiar details need not concern us but her thought processes are not to be missed: "True, women do pose a problem for the Air Force brass. But that problem isn't rooted in the fact that we are women per se. Rather, we're a problem because, in the Air Force's collective imagination, we're identified with sex."

The Air Force is stuck, she believes, in a 1950s morality that makes it associate sex—i.e., women—solely with marriage and brothels.

> But when the objects of their affections started accompanying them into battle, the whole system seemed to fall apart. . . . For if the men of the Air Force are no longer traditional macho warriors, upholding God and country by day and whoring at night, who are they? Sentimental soldiers who risk *falling in love* with their crew? . . . The fear isn't just of women distracting men in the Air Force from their work. It's of women feminizing men *altogether*.

That's an argument against women in the military if I've ever read one, but for the life of me I don't think she realized it.

A psychologist who examined Flinn said she has "the social skills of a 12-year-old." While this seems to be true, I see something else. She's a type America turns out in droves: the "natural leader," student-council junkies who lead where everyone else is already going, bowing to every cultural ukase along the way while cherishing a fantasy of independence instilled in them by half-baked teachers who hate original thinkers.

A psychologist who examined Kelly Flinn said she has 'the social skills of a 12-year-old.' While this seems to be true, I see something else.

Happily for Flinn, America reserves a special niche for natural leaders. "I've been asked," she writes, "to run for Congress." □

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

Nobody Knows His Name

TERRY TEACHOUT

WHO now reads James Baldwin? Nobody I know, although his books must be selling: all of them are available in mass-market paperback editions, even the later, truly wretched ones. Yet he has long been a point of reference rather than a continuing presence, and younger readers may be surprised to learn that he was at one time the most admired black writer in America, a man whose opinions were ritually solicited by earnest whites eager to know why blacks hated them so much. Then the caravan moved on, and suddenly the author of *The Fire Next Time* was forgotten but not gone, doomed to spend his later years giving endless interviews (the last resort of the burned-out novelist) and attending meaningless conferences, pretending the world still hung on his every word.

James Baldwin: Early Novels and Stories (Library of America, 970 pp., $35)

James Baldwin: Collected Essays (Library of America, 869 pp., $35)

The Library of America has charted the course of Baldwin's long decline in a pair of volumes devoted to his fiction and essays, and one thing they make abundantly clear is that he was always too self-absorbed to be a good novelist. Each of the three novels included in *Early Novels and Stories* fails in a different way—*Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953) is promising but stiff, *Giovanni's Room* (1956) weepy and implausible, *Another Country* (1962) noisily hysterical—but all have in common their author's inability to write convincingly

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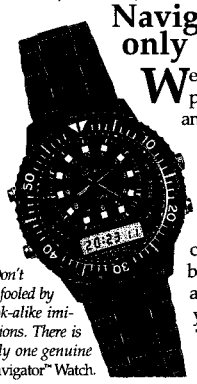

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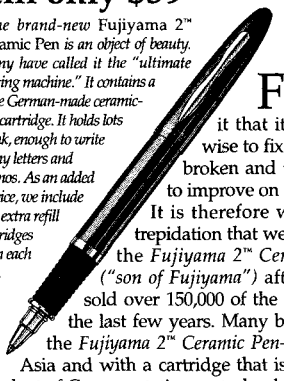

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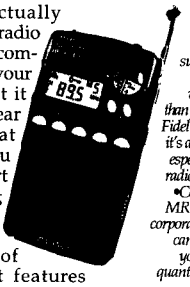

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about anyone but himself, thinly disguised. It was only when he ripped off the ill-fitting novelist's mask and spoke his mind in his own tart voice that readers sat up and took notice.

Baldwin began publishing essays in *The Nation*, *The New Leader*, and *Commentary* shortly after World War II. These pieces, collected in *Notes of a Native Son* (1955) and *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961), and reprinted in *Collected Essays*, have retained the power to startle, both because they are so fabulously well written and because their author, for all his rage at the plight of blacks in postwar America, rejected the constricting ideology of protest, refusing to play anybody's game but his own:

> The difficulty then, for me, of being a Negro writer was the fact that I was, in effect, prohibited from examining my own experience too closely by the tremendous demands and the very real dangers of my social situation. . . . I wanted to prevent myself from becoming *merely* a Negro; or, even, merely a Negro writer. I wanted to find out in what way the *specialness* of my experience could be made to connect me with other people instead of dividing me from them.

Had James Baldwin lived longer, his homosexuality might well have made him fashionable again.

But in the Sixties, Baldwin shed his hard-won detachment and plunged head first into the whirlpool of radicalism. *The Fire Next Time* (1963), his most famous book, is a preposterous farrago of scare-whitey posturing ("A bill is coming in that I fear America is not prepared to pay") and gassy generalizations ("But white Americans do not believe in death, and this is why the darkness of my skin so intimidates them"). The resulting cocktail briefly intoxicated guilty liberals, but, once the buzz wore off, Baldwin found it impossible to hold the attention of a fickle public drawn to the stronger wine and madder music of such tough guys as Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver. His prose grew shriller and slacker, all to no avail; by 1973, his stock had fallen so low that an editor at *Time*, calling Baldwin "passé," declined to print a story about him.

Had Baldwin lived longer (he died in 1987), his homosexuality might well have made him fashionable again, but it carried no cachet with the Baptist ministers of the civil-rights movement—Martin Luther King Jr. kept him at arm's length—and was no less objectionable to the Black Muslims and Black Panthers with whom he subsequently sought to curry favor. (There is no puritan like a political puritan.) It may well be that the Can-you-top-this? rhetoric of his later years was motivated in part by a need to prove himself to those who, like Cleaver, explicitly challenged his manhood.

But the source of Baldwin's frenzy can just as easily be found in his early essays, in which he is forever arguing that Americans are out of touch with their sexuality, a stock routine beloved of Eisenhower-era homosexual novelists (and one to which his Pentecostal background added extra zip). Just as revealing is the way the young Baldwin, notwithstanding his avowed determination to be more than just "a Negro writer," contrives to foreshadow the wildest excesses of present-day identity politics:

> I know . . . that the most crucial time in my own development came when I was forced to recognize that I was a kind of bastard of the West; when I followed the line of my past I did not find myself in Europe but in Africa. And this meant that in some subtle way, in a really profound way, I brought to Shakespeare, Bach, Rembrandt, to the stones of Paris, to the cathedral at Chartres, and to the Empire State Building, a special attitude. These were not really my creations, they did not contain my history . . . I was an interloper; this was not my heritage.

Moreover, Baldwin's self-absorption—his obsession with the essayist's "I"—blinded him to the fact that the world was turning before his unseeing eyes. "There is simply no possibility of a real change in the Negro's situation without the most radical and far-reaching changes in the American political and social structure," he wrote in *The Fire Next Time*; in fact, the situation of blacks in America had already changed drastically by 1963, and soon would be transformed almost beyond recognition.

It was Baldwin's inability (or unwillingness) to acknowledge the significance of this epochal transformation which rendered so many of his books as unreadable as the leaden protest novels of the Thirties he once attacked so eloquently. The fierce young man who in his best essays sought only to write honestly and well about "the specialness of my experience" has a claim on our attention; the middle-aged hysteric who confused his private anguish with the common lot of ordinary blacks does not. Such is ever and always the fate of the artist who undertakes to speak for his people, instead of for himself. □

Mr. Teachout, Commentary*'s music critic, is writing a biography of H. L. Mencken.*

Walker Percy, Big Deal

MATTHEW CAROLAN

ONE day some years ago, while working for *Thought* magazine (a religious journal published by Fordham University), I was instructed to typeset an article about some author named Walker Percy. As I set routinely about my task, a sense of horror came over me, and my fingers recoiled from these, the first words from a Percy novel I had ever read (or typed):

Walker Percy: A Life, by Patrick Samway, SJ (Farrar, Straus, 506 pp, $35)

> And what samurai self-love of death, let alone the little death of everyday f—-you love, can match the double Winchester come of taking oneself into oneself, the cold-steel extension of oneself into mouth, yes, for you, for me, for this, the logical and ultimate act of f—-you love f—-off world, the penetration and union of perfect cold gunmetal into warm quailing mortal flesh, the coming to end all coming, brain cells which together faltered and fell short, now flowered and flew apart, flung like stars around the whole dark world.

I wondered out loud just who this awful man could be. "Oh, he's a famous Catholic novelist," said Patty, the edi-

Mr. Carolan is NR*'s executive editor.*

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tor's assistant, and an evangelical Christian. She didn't say anything more, but I wondered if Patty knew enough about Percy to classify him as Whore-of-Babylon material.

So imagine my shock when I later found out that there were also readers of the very conservative Catholic newspaper *The Wanderer* who recommended Walker Percy. And that my Thomist professors paraphrased him in class: "Modern man is a Cartesian cogito, attached to a set of balls." Puzzled as to why this crude man was so appealing to

There is a kind of academic chatter about Percy's work that tries to make him into a very rare, if not impossible, thing: a great Catholic novelist.

Catholics, and being a crude Catholic myself, I decided I had to read him.

Well, I have since read several Percy novels, and I am still mystified. Percy's fiction is thin on plot and characterization—let alone Catholicism. His main contribution to Catholic culture, it seems, is his attack on modern secular culture, in which he offers his own fragmentary vision of what is terribly wrong with living as a modern man. I say this with some hesitancy, however, since when I read the early novels (*The Moviegoer*, *The Last Gentleman*) the failings of modernity didn't seem to have anything to do with it. Only when I read some official interpretations by die-hard Percy fans did I realize that I had missed the anti-Cartesianism.

In fact, these exegetes can get a little carried away. Some defend every nuance of Percy's writing, including his biological references—to organs, blood, even attractive female derrières—as a brilliantly calculated attempt to weigh down the abstract rationalism of our times. Try as I might, however, I cannot read either the murderous windpipe-slitting scene in *Lancelot*, or the prurient sexual matter that surrounds it, as a rebuff to Descartes.

This myth distorts the real triumph of Percy's life, amply illustrated by Fr.

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Samway in this workmanlike biography, which was to endure courageously through terrible struggles, managing to communicate something of himself and—an achievement in which he took a certain pride—not committing suicide.

Suicide is a persistent theme in Percy's work. During his youth in Birmingham, Alabama, both his grandfather and his father killed themselves with rifles. In the same period, his mother died in a mysterious car accident, which he believed was an intentional act of despair.

After their parents' death, Walker and his brothers went to live with their cousin, "Uncle" Will Percy. Uncle Will, a wealthy man, took good care of them, but it seems that he steered Walker into a profession, medicine, for which he had no calling. During his medical studies in New York City, Walker became infected with tuberculosis and was forced into a long period of isolation during his recovery. Only after that trauma did he try writing regularly. After several false starts, and constant haggling with his editors about revisions, he succeeded in publishing *The Moviegoer*.

Percy's sufferings were mostly of the spiritual kind. He often accused himself of "acedia," or sloth, in which a person does nothing because he despairs of living up to his potential. Percy said he had a hard time just getting through Wednesday. He complained of his spiritual barrenness, and of the necessity to make his living as a writer. These problems coincided with a growing awareness of the spiritual problems and temptations of the modern world. Percy desperately wanted to find a way to some more refreshed manner of being in the world, for himself and for others.

To that end, he sought nothing less than a complete refashioning of the epistemological basis for our culture—a daunting task, one would have said, for anyone short of Aquinas, let alone a man suffering from acedia. Nonetheless, Percy set about it—for instance, in the philosophical essays reprinted in *The Message in the Bottle*. It would be, he said, a relief from writing novels, where there was the risk that people like me wouldn't quite get it. In a letter to Shelby Foote, Percy listed his two main goals: "1) write a good novel, 2) correct the Cartesian mind–body split which has screwed up the West for three hundred years. Actually 2) will be easier than 1)."

In his more concentrated attempts to repair the divide in our perceptions between matter and spirit (which, of course, is much older than Descartes)—Percy tackled the age-old question of the transmission of knowledge. Influenced by Jacques Maritain, he argued that knowledge has a mystical dimension, with something vague, personal, and poetic about it, as opposed to the direct, sterile "intuition" of matter in motion which dominates modern science. Such a small-*c* catholic approach allows for various forms of knowing and also suggests a fundamental role for other minds and traditions.

Of course, there is nothing distinctively Catholic in this. However, modern Catholic intellectuals find Percy's philosophical mission intriguing, since any epistemology that effectively refutes the solipsism in Descartes suggests that there must be an ideal communal relationship—and Catholics have one in the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. What's more, as Percy reflected on the manner by which linguistic signs transmit knowledge, he employed the semiotic theories of the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. These rely on the notion of triads, and the idea that absolute Truth (as Aquinas would describe God) can be known only at the end of a long historical process (not unlike salvation history) by an ethically ideal community of inquirers (a secular communion of saints, so to speak).

Where did Percy's interest in dualism come from? Nearly every aspect of his work points to the mystery of individual existence and to an element within the human person that Pope John Paul II calls the "incommunicable." Percy's writing almost always seems to be about what it is to understand the meaning of being "me," in this body, in this place, at this time, with these sufferings and joys, in Covington, Louisiana, or in New York City—about the impossible challenge of reconciling that inner mystery with the demand of our nature to be social beings who communicate ourselves to others, and the demand of our God to love our neighbor, who is, also, incommunicable.

For Christians, of course, the true resolution of such "dualism" comes in the new life, when, as the Biblical passage says, God calls us by a new name (Isaiah 62:2) which is distinctively our own and communicates all that we are and have been. Walker Percy, succumbing to cancer, took that name in 1990.

Percy's writing is sharp at times. Even his most boring novel, *The Last Gentleman*, contains passages that make you stop and say, "Yes, I know that about life." But there is also a kind of academic chatter about Percy's work—undoubtedly encouraged by his Catholic orthodoxy—that tries to make him into a very rare, if not impossible thing: a great Catholic novelist.

Percy was actually just a very good, maybe great, Catholic man. □

A Touch of Evil

MICHAEL J. BEHE

DARTH Vader was a thoroughly bad man, destroying planets, kidnapping princesses, and such. That's the way it should be; we like our movie villains uncomplicated. Mr. Vader's only virtue was in begetting Luke Skywalker, and in the finale, after we had hissed for a few hours, that relationship was enough to redeem him. Yet what if the opening scenes of *Star Wars* had shown the Vader family at home, mom and dad cooing at baby Luke around the hearth? What then would we have thought when the scene shifted to worlds being blown away?

Thomas Henry Huxley, a/k/a "Darwin's Bulldog," was a villain of sorts. Though not evil himself, perhaps, he pressed an evil on the world as one of the nineteenth century's principal champions of aggressive secular materialism. But in this marvelous biography Adrian Desmond confronts us with his subject's considerable complexity. Huxley, who

***Huxley: From Devil's Disciple to Evolution's High Priest*, by Adrian Desmond (Addison Wesley, 820 pp., $37.50)**

Mr. Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University and a fellow of the Discovery Institute, is the author of Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution.

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was "never at peace unless he was fighting, never alive unless he was slaying," made a career of flogging bishops, pushing godless evolution, and trampling those who would impede his dream of a new social order guided by science. At home, however, Darth turned into "Hal," devoted husband and father of seven.

> He took the six-week break at home to clear the backlog. Here his only plague was a curly head poking round the door, wanting to play. Noel, three, was articulate and inquisitive, Jessie was toddling and precocious, 16-month-old Marian completed the blond conspiracy. Nettie, five months pregnant, looked forward to her next Christmas baby. There was a new togetherness as Hal's first holiday at home turned into a second "honeymoon." Evenings were spent proofreading Spencer's *First Principles*. Hal passed the pages to Nettie, who liked their calm tone.

Thomas Huxley was born in 1825 above a butcher's shop in Ealing, a small village near London, the youngest of six children. Neglected by his intelligent, impoverished father—a former teacher who once had instructed the young John Henry Newman—Thomas spent his early teens in the working-class city of Coventry. There he first had the thought that respect and financial security should be the rewards of achievement, instead of the perquisites of class. There he acquired an abiding antipathy to religion, and specifically the Church of England, whose state-granted privileges alienated it from many of the poor. In later decades the disfranchised would flock to his public lectures to hear the new gospel of evolution.

Huxley, a/k/a 'Darwin's Bulldog,' preached nihilism and wrote that human beings are automatons.

Huxley was largely self-taught; his reading of James Hutton's *Theory of the Earth*, "that aimless earth, wheeling on, with no signs of a beginning and 'no prospect of an end,'" attracted him to science as a base of knowledge to rival theology. Apprenticed to a doctor, he eventually began medical studies himself at a cut-rate anatomy school. Upon graduating with distinction, Huxley joined the Queen's navy as an assistant surgeon and naturalist on the mapping ship *H.M.S. Rattlesnake*. The plan was to earn enough money to retire his debts while building a scientific reputation. (Unlike the well-born Charles Darwin, Huxley had to scratch for a living.) The voyage of the *Rattlesnake* brought a bonus: at a port stop in Sydney he met Henrietta Anne Heathorn. Nettie and Hal were quickly engaged.

Back in England Huxley's life accelerated. He held several professorships simultaneously, helped found the journal *Nature*, and was elected president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Huxley waged war mercilessly on the anti-Darwinian paleontologist Richard Owen. Hal and Nettie wretchedly mourned three-year-old Noel, dead of a sudden fever. Huxley pushed to make science a paying profession with its own standards, financed by the government and answerable to no bishop. Hal supported parents, sisters, and nieces who were still mired in poverty. Huxley preached nihilism to the workers, and wrote that human beings are automatons. He argued for evolution as an alternative to religious origin stories and worked to have science taught in schools, instead of the classics. Huxley coined the words "agnostic" (to put the burden of proof on others) and "creationist" (to ridicule his enemies, although none of them believed species came *ex nihilo*).

The dynamo eventually slowed. As Hal was dying, Nettie, his wife of more than forty years, fussed over him. "She had waited almost as long as Rachel to marry her Jacob and the tenderness showed them as 'lovers to the end.'"

The distance of a century shows how Huxley helped change society's assumptions. Science now is the respected, remunerative profession he fought to make it. The influence of the church has drastically decreased, and public discussion of morality largely takes its cues from science. Government officials fret over how well schools teach math and science; the classics are all but forgotten. Evolutionary naturalism is the air we breathe—although, notes Desmond, "Nature's undeviating causality [is] as unprovable as the Holy Ghost." On the other hand, the great wars of the twentieth century have shown the dark side of science. Science is no longer "power to the people. It [is] power to the professionals." Science itself has changed its views. That aimless earth, wheeling on,

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now has a beginning and will have an end. Life no longer oozes from sea mud, as Huxley thought; rather, according to Francis Crick, its origin "seems almost a miracle, so many are the conditions necessary to get it going." And in the face of the complexity of the cell, Darwin's natural selection as an explanation for life is more problematic than even Huxley thought.

The engaging prose of Adrian Desmond reveals a pivotal, complicated figure, who was shaped by his age and who in turn shaped the modern world for good and ill. Huxley fought his professional battles with ferocity, and faced his personal trials with gentleness. "Through all, the 'cynic and skeptic' clung to love as the one 'mysterious reality.'" Darth Vader, call your office. □

News from the Thinkery

E. CHRISTIAN KOPFF

Martha Nussbaum, a professor of ethics, has brazenly distorted scholarship in defense of a political cause.

MARTHA Nussbaum, a celebrated classicist who has lately become Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, has good news about American universities. "Never before have there been so many talented and committed young faculty so broadly dispersed in institutions of so many different kinds, thinking about difficult issues connecting education with citizenship." Or is it good news? If I heard that "never before have there been so many talented young mechanics, thinking about difficult issues connecting transportation with citizenship," I should want to know whether cars were running better. Talented young faculty may be thinking at East Boondoggle State Teachers College, but I am more concerned to know whether their students are learning the difficult subjects they will need to learn in order to participate effectively in the complex Western traditions of self-rule and science.

Here is an example of the good news. At St. Lawrence University, "a small liberal-arts college in Upstate New York," the young faculty get sent to Kenya for a month "to study African village life." Then they teach classes in which "students submit closely reasoned papers analyzing arguments for and against outsiders' taking a stand on the practice of female circumcision in Africa." Prof. Nussbaum returns to this program again and again, in part because the teachers do not believe in the "ultimately incoherent" notion of cultural relativism. She discusses two student papers. The one opposing the practice is rambling and unclear. The paper saying it is none of our business is intelligent and forceful. The outraged teacher gives it a good grade, but scribbles in the margin, "Where do you draw the line? If a country were slaughtering all male children, should we intervene?" Liberals really want to know, not whether we should take a position, but when we should invade.

Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education, by Martha C. Nussbaum (Harvard, 328 pp., $26)

Which is to say, the "difficult" issues that talented young faculty are meditating on turn out to be the usual PC suspects: sex and race.

What about "citizenship"? "When I use a word," said Humpty Dumpty, "it means what I want it to mean." When Martha Nussbaum says "citizenship," she means "world citizenship." By "world citizenship" she means an attitude of support for global free trade and conventional Enlightenment liberalism. When she says "classical," as in the subtitle of her book—she means either world citizenship, as just defined—because the phrase "citizen of the world" was used by the ancient Stoics, on whom she has elsewhere written some rather good pages—or the demolition of traditional values, which she calls "Socratic."

This is not Plato's Socrates, except when Mrs. Nussbaum uses passages from *Republic V* to bolster feminism, but something more like the head of the Thinkery in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, a parody of Socrates, on which, again, Mrs. Nussbaum has previously written a good scholarly article. This Socrates is not sent by Apollo to awaken in each person's soul a rational consciousness of the traditional wisdom we recognize but cannot explain. He is an ancient Voltaire who destroys young people's loyalty to traditional values. He is also a democrat, gadfly to a democracy he calls "noble but sluggish." In my text of the *Apology*, Socrates uses that expression to describe the city of Athens, not its democracy, the irrationality of which he is constantly mocking; but the scholarly precision which plays so impressive a role in Prof. Nussbaum's text of Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium* disappears when she defends the liberal regime.

People who are familiar with recent controversies in the academy will not be surprised by this. In 1993, testifying as an expert witness on behalf of gay-rights activists in a case challenging a Colorado constitutional amendment as, among other things, an "establishment of religion," Mrs. Nussbaum told the court that moral opposition to homosexual conduct was a peculiarly Christian theological innovation and did not exist in pre-Christian traditions. To support this claim, the now professor of ethics brazenly misrepresented to the court not only the writing of Plato, but also the work of present-day historians. In this, she was detected by John Finnis of Oxford and Robert George of Princeton. Prof. Nussbaum's classical scholarship cannot be relied upon when she places it in the service of her political causes.

Major non-Western traditions fare no better at her hands. Universities should teach about China, she asserts; but how? "When we decide to teach 'Chinese values' . . . , what should we be studying? The Confucian tradition? The Marxist critique of that tradition? The values of contemporary Chinese feminists?" For her, the question is an open one. When Prof. Nussbaum portrays an American businesswoman's problems working in China, she points not to the

Mr. Kopff is associate director of the Honors Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and editor of a critical edition of Euripides' Bacchae.

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woman's dealings with a brutal dictatorship, but to her difficulties adjusting to Chinese nannies. Mrs. Nussbaum's nuanced care, typical of liberals, not to offend Marxist dictators contrasts with her attitude toward the traditional American way of life, which she describes as "suffused with group hatred," "consumed by bigotry," etc. There are no such bouquets for Marxist China.

At least she mentions Confucius. She objects to teaching the tradition of the Vedas, without mentioning them explicitly. That would mean confronting students with a vision of the transcendent, of the priest and the warrior, the *brahmin* and the *kshatriya*, even of the role of the castes. These are not thoughts a liberal wants to have disturbing the minds of students contemplating the fate of the Kenyan clitoris.

We get pages on Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, in a way that suggests that measures of reform are needed to give black literature a more prominent place in university curricula. Actually, the American Negro is quite the opposite of invisible in today's university. He is, in fact, George Gilder's Visible Man. The Invisible Man is the traditional conservative. Mrs. Nussbaum calls Women's Studies programs diverse because the faculty hold positions that range from liberal to Marxist. Sounds like Chinese culture without the Confucianism. She praises a course at Scripps College, where students ponder the Enlightenment, then read opponents of the Enlightenment and liberal responses to them. The opponents are "formerly colonized populations, feminists, non-Western philosophy, Western post-modernist thought." No Burke or Irving Babbitt, no de Maistre or Donoso Cortés, no Carl Schmitt or Oswald Spengler, no René Guenon or Julius Evola. "Dialogue" in Prof. Nussbaum's mind is only for those who accept the premises of the Enlightenment: privileging the secular over the transcendent, the economic over the political, the global over the national and local.

Prof. Nussbaum was first prompted to defend reform when she read Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind*. Despite her polemic she shares with Bloom an explicit commitment to Socrates and liberalism. Neither devotes much time to the curriculum praised by Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, and Albert Jay Nock as the foundation of self-rule and science: the study of Greek, Latin, and mathematics. For

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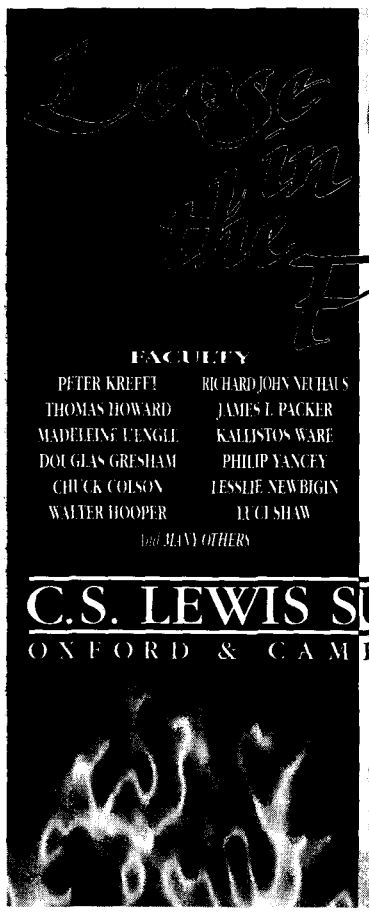

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Prof. Nussbaum, Classics was the Renaissance invention of anti-clerical humanists, and American culture "is not in any meaningful sense continuous with that of ancient Greece." The only university she mentions as doing a respectable job of teaching foreign languages is Brigham Young, in the business of training globetrotting Mormon evangelists, from whom she turns with a shudder. Today's university has little time for the study of difficult foreign languages and math. Students are too busy to learn the Pythagorean Theorem or the vocabulary of Plato and St. John, of Cicero and St. Thomas, when their minds are occupied with writing essays on the Closing of the African Clitoris. The list of university presidents whose plaudits crowd this book's dustjacket indicates the curricular fate of America's college students: subjects which transmit the mental infrastructure of our society are marginalized in favor of the degraded and the degrading. The educational model for America's best universities is Aristophanes's Thinkery. □

CITY DESK

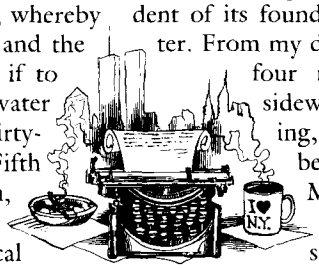
The Concept of New York

RICHARD BROOKHISER

THIS column, here in its first installment, is called "City Desk," partly for the "stop the presses" flavor of the phrase, although by now this is a very old homage. Fifty years ago, Priscilla Buckley had a drunken scamp of a colleague who would run through the lobby of the *Daily News* building, past the huge sunken globe, hollering "Scoop! Scoop!" Another scamp followed, a moment later, yelling "Kill that story!" A joke, even then.

But mainly "City Desk" refers to my desk, a desk in a city—and not just any city. New York has been The City for about a century now.

Recently New York commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of Greater New York, whereby Manhattan acquired Brooklyn and the other jewels in its crown. As if to celebrate, a 101-year-old water main ruptured, leaving a thirty-foot crater in the middle of Fifth Avenue. A gas main joined in, sending up a two-story plume of fire. Ultimately, the political benchmark is as trivial as the explosion turned out to be. New York became The City not because of a legislative real-estate grab, but because it was already coming to incarnate what F. Scott Fitzgerald called "metropolitan urbanity." Urban and urbane are linguistically related words, and sometimes city dwelling and "the bright, gay vigorous elements" (Fitzgerald again) are related things, so that people imagine the latter when they think of the former.



Americans look at New York with a mixture of curiosity, horror, and emulation. (And not just on *Seinfeld*. I never saw a single episode—one of the blessings of not watching television.) People in Dubuque are surely (and rightly) more interested in Dubuque than in New York, or even *Seinfeld*. But they are also more interested in New York than in Des Moines. Most of what happens here happens everywhere else; here it is larger, or more lurid; sometimes sharper. New York is America talking in its sleep.

Many accidents conspired to give New York its prominence. But the accident of its founding gave it its character. From my desk I can see, not only four restaurants, a deli, a sidewalk hidden by scaffolding, and my neighbors' bedrooms, but J. P. Morgan's church, and a park laid out on the site of a 350-year-old farm. New York is one of the oldest cities in the country (older than Williamsburg). It was founded for a specific purpose—to traffic in furs via the Hudson Valley, where the French on the St. Lawrence couldn't interfere. Other American cities were religious and social experiments—the City on the Hill, the City of Brotherly Love. New York was the city of trade, and money. Radicals might think of a dozen ways to seize the money, and liberals have thought of a million ways to spend it. But beneath their chatter, and their destructive policies, New York has been about making it, and displaying it. You had the right to display it, of course, if you had made it. No drones here.

Mainly, 'City Desk' refers to my desk, a desk in a city—and not just any city.

New York was also a Dutch city. The old farm was owned by Peter Stuyvesant, the last Dutch governor. He stands in the park, in statue form, glaring and peglegged. The culture of New Amsterdam, writes the historian David Hackett Fischer, "combined formal toleration, social distance, and inequality in high degree." The themes for all future variations were given. Visitors to New York in the late eighteenth century described a city that had exactly the same energy it has now. "The several classes . . . mix very little." "I know of no place where food of every kind is cheaper or more abundant." "They talk very loud, very fast, and altogether. If they ask you a question, before you utter three words of your answer, they will break out upon you again and talk away" (this was observed by John Adams, who was not easily interrupted). "The readiest way for a stranger to recommend himself" is to "drink stoutly" and "talk bawdy." "The inhabitants are in general brisk and lively" and "dress very gay." Only the last feature requires modification, since everyone now wears black. (My wife, who is a psychoanalyst, wore a red blouse in one session; her patient exclaimed, "A color!") But one wears it, as one's bright forerunners did, to be fashionable.

The age and persistence of these paradigms is a blow to ethnic self-flattery, to all the Irish and Italians and Jews and Pakistanis and whoever else might think they have set New York's tone. But it was there, as steady as concert A, when New York was twenty thousand English, Dutch, and their slaves, huddling within a mile of the Battery.

These birthmarks impart a frantic quality to the rush every great city has, and perhaps a coolness as well. New York's look is sleek stone and steel. The gaudy Beaux Arts buildings sit squarely

Mr.Brookhiser is a senior editor at NR.

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in their right-angled lots. New York even made a glass building that works, the laboratory gizmo of the Citicorp Building.

"City Desk" won't be about the city. It won't rate the Chinese restaurants, or describe the mayor's latest drag act. It will be from the city, about interesting things. Samuel Johnson, who lived in London, which was The City of his century, admired the Strand, but thought "the full tide of human existence" was most visible at Charing Cross. I will show you what tide I can see from my desk. □

FILM

Minus Four

JOHN SIMON

RECENT months produced a spate of films even Argus couldn't have coped with. Let me dispatch a few with condign unceremoniousness. The Canadian Atom Egoyan's ***The Sweet Hereafter***, from a seemingly better novel by Russell Banks—about a school bus that skids into icy waters drowning a number of children, and what that does to the morale of a small town—is marred by several things, chiefly Egoyan's screenplay. Ian Holm plays a well-meaning but officious lawyer who tries to make the grieving families sue for damages, but inhibiting skeletons come out of everyone's closet, including his own.

As usual, Egoyan cannot resist his terminal pretentiousness. He introduces visual/verbal quotations from the poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," as if Browning had bearing on Banks, which is manifest nonsense. He also invents an endless framing conversation on an airplane that detracts more than it adds. He allows the odiously attitudinizing Mychael (*sic*) Danna to compose a preposterous score, and casts a number of small-time actors in roles that make too large demands. Except for Holm's performance and the silverpoint-like wintry landscapes, everything about the film matches human disaster with artistic catastrophe.

■ Similarly icy panoramas prove photogenic in another clinker, ***The Winter Guest***, starring Emma Thompson and her mom, Phyllida Law, as mother and daughter. That may be the only point of (dubious) interest in this contrived and exasperating bore, adapted by Sharman Macdonald from her play, and directed by the actor Alan Rickman, apparently not content with *playing* heavies. Against bleached-out land- and seascapes in provincial Scotland, daughter Frances mourns her dead husband and threatens to leave for Australia, while mother Elspeth natters at her trying to stop her from leaving, God and mother only know why.

Intercut with this are three subplots. 1) Two young boys preoccupied with childish, largely sexual, problems. 2) A couple of crones haunting funerals for free meals and arguing with each other. 3) Frances's young son almost getting seduced by the neighboring sexpot, but kept from consummation by the sight of a snapshot of his late father. The psychology is almost as thick as the Scottish burrs; the symbolism, outdoing the snake in *Macbeth*, is not even scotched, never mind killed. Arlene Cockburn may be the most unappealing seductress in recent movie history;

Racking my brains, I could come up with only one cliché Alan Rudolph overlooked.

Emma Thompson, with a full crop of tricks and spikily close-cropped hair, brings to the wintry surroundings a bit of *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Act II, scene 2, line 10): "thorny hedgehogs, be not seen." Neither should this movie, with its symbolically frozen-over sea—at least not until hell follows suit.

■ Try as they might, these stinkers cannot hold a candle to 1997's nadir, *Aft-*

(Continues on page 61)

Mr. Simon is NR's film critic.

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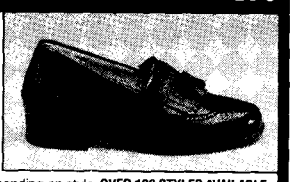

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SIMON
(Continued from page 59)

erglow, which, unsurprisingly, has garnered a number of (after) glowing reviews. The writer–director, Alan Rudolph, has learned only one thing in the 15 films he has churned out: how to make each worse than the one before. But even he will have serious difficulties trying to surpass the horror of his latest. Rudolph, a toady and protégé of Robert Altman, has all his master's defects, plus a few uniquely his own. *Afterglow* is an enchiridion of every known literary and cinematic cliché; racking my brains, I could come up with only one Rudolph overlooked. Even in that field, I guess, perfection eludes him.

How many times have we groaned at characters trying to remember the names of Disney's seven dwarfs? Or a woman pretending to talk about a friend when she means herself? Or leaning back, drained, against a door closing after a man in her life? Or a spouse tossing a snapshot of bygone connubial bliss into the fireplace? We get a man in a bar picking up the smoking woman next to him with "Smoke gets into your eyes," and promptly ordering "A bottle of Dom Pérignon and two glasses." (If at least it had been Perrier-Jouët!) "You're the most fascinating woman I met in my whole life," he adds.

Elsewhere we get "Ever wonder about women being like fine wine?" Again, "The worst part is finding out late in life that nothing lasts," and "I like the way you smell—like a man." Also a more recent visual cliché (first seen in an Altman movie) of a woman (irrelevantly) using a toilet, and three separate gratuitous overhead shots with the camera rotating 360 degrees, not one of them—shot or degree—justified.

Rudolph excels at subtle sexual innuendo: e.g., "Turn me on; make it wet," from a young woman to her sexy plumber. Or explaining her skimpy dress to her sexually uncooperative husband, "I'm ovulating," a gentle hint to impregnate her. Or the middle-aged wife of the philandering plumber asking upon his return home, "How was work? Unplug a few tubes?" Or take this dazzling paradox: "I don't know what I like, but I know what art is." The story concerns two troubled couples, the middle-aged Lucky (!) and Phyllis, and the young Jeffrey and Marianne, in sexual interaction that results in nothing. The scene is Montreal, which seems to contain only one apartment building, the famous Habitat, with which Rudolph is obsessed.

Nick Nolte lets his Lion King mane do his acting, Jonny Lee Miller keeps squaring his already jutting jaw, and Lara Flynn Boyle carries on like a hard-porn actress compensating for being caught in soft-core. Julie Christie hams it up with silent-screen aplomb, and has already received several awards for her outrageous overacting.

■ Various reviewers have faulted Woody Allen's ***Deconstructing Harry*** for being too autobiographical; I call it merely autistic. Allen's trick is to laugh at his writer–hero Harry Block, but in such a way as to make his faults redound to his credit. He is perplexed by all the desirable women revolving around him, he has a problem keeping his fascinating life and fictions (into which the movie keeps turning) apart, and he has a hard time finding anyone to accompany him on a car trip to his old college to receive an honorary doctorate (shades of *Wild Strawberries*, no less).

The movie jerks us around in time and place, between Harry's life and Harry's fictions, with beautiful women fussing over homely, aging Harry (read Woody), and with Harry himself, in the fiction scenes, portrayed by good-looking actors. There are also desperate devices to make the movie look hip. An opening sequence of a woman getting out of a taxi is repeated over and over again without rhyme or reason. A character becomes blurry on screen, which is funny once, but fatal when reprised. Harry verbalizes some of his trendy and titillating kinks, but they are never shown. Big-name actors appear in bit parts for supposed prestige. Disjointedness is reveled in, like atonality and discord in modern music. And the buzzword "deconstructing" in the title is an earnest of Allen's gravitas.

There are, to be sure, a few funny moments here and there, but the film as a whole is a poseur's self-congratulatory wet dream. My advice to Allen would be to keep himself out of his movies (it is getting progressively harder to look at him), or at least not have the most attractive and respected young actresses (Elisabeth Shue, Amy Irving, Judy Davis, Demi Moore, etc.) milling around him. And to stop trying to impress us with his intellect and erudition: he who deconstructs, self-destructs. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

C. S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide, by Walter Hooper (HarperCollins, 960 pp., $40)

THE reputation of C. S. Lewis is constantly evolving as he is continually rediscovered, although, until now, always partially and incompletely. What we have needed is a restoration, and Walter Hooper gives us exactly that: Lewis whole and rich. In the section of this book titled "Life of C. S. Lewis" Hooper reveals much, as in the treatment of Tolkien's devoted role in Lewis's accepting his Cambridge professorship. "Writings" is the heart of the *Companion & Guide*. For each of the 32 Lewis books treated, Hooper provides background, summary, and a sampling of (often amazing) contemporaneous reviews. "Key Ideas" is the pulse of the book. Many entries are familiar (Allegory, Joy, Chronological Snobbery) but many others are not (The Law of Inattention; Thrills, A Distrust of). In "What's What" are 67 entries—from Addison's Walk and the Cowley Fathers to the New York C. S. Lewis Society, Translations, and (the utterly charming) Dedicatees—to satisfy more nagging curiosity than all other secondary works on Lewis combined. Of all the entries in the book, this reviewer's favorite concerns Lewis's remarkable mother, whom we meet as never before. In short, this is the Lewis book to have, for it brings us closer than ever to the man to whom we owe so much and for whom so many of us pray. —JAMES COMO

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ON THE RIGHT / Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

More Everything From Washington

NEW YORK, JANUARY 9

WASHINGTON, D.C. January 6, 2000. President Clinton announced today his plan for a federal program to take care of the special health needs of Americans 45 to 55 years old. "There are twenty million Americans out there during the most demanding years of their economic lives who need medical care and can't afford to get it. Those are the mothers and fathers who are struggling to pay the college bills for their children, to meet their mortgage payments, many facing layoffs, many uninsured or insufficiently insured." The category Mr. Clinton has in mind to help with his new Medicare bill is known by insurance statisticians as the "near near elderly." The problems of the "near elderly" were coped with by the Administration's Medicare Expansion Bill of 1998 . . .

Several things were predictable. The first, that with the faintest whiff of a "surplus," ideas would bombard the Clinton Administration on how to spend that surplus. The second, that the philosophical disarray of the Republican opposition is such that the current proposal actually hit the ground running. Early reports of "moderate" Republican reaction are that indeed there is reluctance to expand Medicare, but, to quote Laurie McGinley of the *Wall Street Journal*, "many Republicans may find it hard to attack an election-year valentine for older Americans, who typically vote at higher rates than their younger counterparts."

Prescriptive learning ("sanctioned or authorized by long-standing custom or usage") is the means by which a mature political community governs itself, applying reason and experience. There are two models by which we are instructed. The first advises us: Let things stand if experience confirms that they have proved satisfactory. The other is the sunset-legislation approach: Many laws are enacted and sit around years later for no better reason than that to repeal them would put people out of work. Some years ago the exciting proposal was made by Sen. Charles Percy and others to apply sunset laws to all regulatory federal agencies and programs: Ten years after they came into being, they would be eliminated unless relicensed, after examination of need and performance, by Congress.

The congressional decision in 1994 was to oppose the Clinton plan to turn medical care over to the public sector. That decision was ratified by the Republican landslide in November of that year. On the basis of that event, and what had come before, we should have arrived at the profound decision that we should not intrude government into medicine any further—prescriptive wisdom. The President now proposes to enlarge the scope of Medicare even though projections establish that Medicare is a loose cannon.

Practically at the same moment, President Clinton announced a program for child care, a $21-billion package which proposes not merely nannies/observers to look after the tots during working hours, but whole pedagogical theme parks by which to accelerate the learning experience.

The idea of Washington, D.C., addressing the problem of child care is an arrant misapplication of form and priorities. The child-care problem is so varied as to cry out for individuation. The problem in Staten Island is very different from the problem in the Bronx. Even so, the municipality of New York needs to address the problems. The child-care problem in Davenport, Iowa, has some things in common with, but others distinctive from, the problem in Ogden, Utah. The political principle of subsidiarity ordains that a higher government echelon should not address a problem that can be addressed by a lower echelon, and the Ninth and Tenth Amendments to the Constitution make the same point. Child care is the model of a social problem that cries out for local fine-tuning to address appropriately. The only thing the Federal Government can do is to distribute money. But that money comes in from the same sources that are there to finance social programs with a sense of local needs and priorities.

"Bad news, Senator. Ethics has reared its ugly head."

The fusillades from Mr. Clinton, proposing the progressive annexation of more age groups for his infirm Medicare program and suggesting that child care is a problem best handled by the Federal Government, leaves the observer with the demoralizing sense that maybe nothing is ever truly learned. How exhilarating if the Republicans who control the Congress were to reply to the President that, thanks very much, we don't need to go back and re-do kindergarten. □

Judicial High In California

NEW YORK, JANUARY 6

Long live California, even if we aren't always sorry we don't live there. The news two days ago was something on the order of a Whisky Rebellion mounted by Californians who want to smoke their cigarettes, dammit, and to hell with that new law that makes smoking illegal except in your own cellar. Where will it end? The scent of rebellion has reached New York City, where the mayor hesitated to sign a new law making it illegal to advertise cigarettes within a thousand feet of a school building. Do we have the beginnings of a national movement?

And of course California is the crucible of the medical-marijuana movement. That mess makes the Augean stables look like spilt tea. What happened is that Proposition 215 was passed in November of 1996. What it says is that a doctor can authorize in writing or orally the use of marijuana by any patient seeking relief from the assorted pains marijuana usefully addresses; and authorized patients may cultivate their own supply of marijuana. The law has been criticized for reasons implausible and plausible. It is, really, quite dumb for lay critics of marijuana to prattle on about how there are other means (pills) to bring equivalent relief to those who suffer. That question is as easily disposed of as by taking the testimony of one or one hundred people who have tried the pill without effect, but who get relief from smoking marijuana. On the other hand it is obviously true that people who egged on Proposition 215 professing only concern for the afflicted are, many of them, just plain rooters for marijuana legalization.

Which brings the story to Peter McWilliams. I have for him the reverence you have (those of you who use word processors) for the person who introduced you to the computer. He wrote a book about computers so lucid and engaging it

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became a best-seller. He went on to become a syndicated columnist on the cyberworld, but simultaneously he pressed other pursuits, poetical, photographic, and philosophical. He is the absolute Number One anarchist in America on matters having to do with personal conduct. He has paid a heavy price for pursuing his passions, suffering now from AIDS and from cancer.

Now, Peter McWilliams is a publisher (Prelude Press) whose books have made ten appearances on the *New York Times* best-seller list. This time around he retained one Todd McCormick to do a book on marijuana growing—for the afflicted. Mr. McCormick proceeded to grow, in a pasture behind a little house in Bel Air purchased with money advanced by McWilliams, not one marijuana plant but four thousand. McCormick had had experience in Amsterdam and was engaged in writing a book on the general subject. Bang! Six thirty in the morning, nine Drug Enforcement agents crash into McWilliams's house, finding him at work on his computer. They simultaneously tell him he is not under arrest and handcuff him. They spend three hours going over every piece of paper in his house (they find one ounce of marijuana, which is within the California legal limit) and walk away with his computer. That is the equivalent of entering the *New York Times* and walking away with the printing machinery.

Well, the ACLU, which is right twice a day, is onto the McWilliams case and is asking the right questions, and there will be interminable arguments and counterarguments, and a certain amount hangs on the outcome, given that a finding of guilt on all counts including conspiracy to manufacture and sell marijuana could put McWilliams away with a life sentence and a $4-million fine. There are those who believe that is going too far; on the other hand there are also those who believe that 24 hours in the cooler is going too far, to say nothing of nine DEA agents at 6:30 A.M. barging into your house with handcuffs.

There is, obviously, a judicial shortcircuit in play here. California says something that sounds like: Okay. On the one hand there is the federal war on drugs, with General Barry McCaffrey up there like George S. Patton defying all obstacles to pressing his war. The difference is that Patton succeeded and McCaffrey is not succeeding and never will. Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* reminds us that in 1980 the Feds spent $4 billion on the drug war, now $32 billion; and the number of people in jail on drug charges went up by the same multiple of eight: from 50,000 to 400,000. How to proceed?

Not, one hopes, with more dawn breakins and removals of computers. Peter McWilliams reports an ironic turn. For his illness he smokes every day. But after you do that for a few weeks you cease to get a high. Marijuana becomes just something that stops nausea, eases pain, reduces interocular pressure, relaxes muscles, and takes the "bottom" out of a depression. So where do we go from here? To jail? □

How to Think About Brinkley

NEW YORK, JANUARY 13

On the David Brinkley front it is time for a ceasefire, during which the following should be considered:

1. The easy distinction and, up to a point, the most reliable has to do with the nature of the relationship between the person who reads the ads on television or radio and the people he is speaking to. Most of the critics who have denounced David Brinkley for taking on the commercials (for Archer Daniels Midland) stress that as a journalist he is forfeiting his presumptive tie to objectivity. How would he handle, one critic asked, a hypothetical second conviction of Archer Daniels Midland for price fixing? (Oscar Wilde would have answered that question: "With difficulty.")

Mr. Brinkley's first defense is, very simply, that he is retired from whatever you wish to call that rather distinctive role he played for forty years, and is now liberated to do what he wishes. The objection to that argument is that during those forty years he created a bond with his legions which is fractured by his going on to the role of hired promoter. An interesting point, but how is that different from Ken Griffey Jr. going on the air to advertise Nike? The fans were brought in to applaud Mr. Griffey's performance as a baseball player. He is trading on that reputation to advance a product he may never have used; so-what time, as far as he is concerned. If Brinkley is forever removed from any responsibility to opine on the behavior of Archer Daniels Midland, how is he traducing his old career by taking on a second career?

2. The business of mouthing commercials is generically disturbing. Consider former mayor Edward Koch of New York, a gentleman of emphatic personal opinion whose views on any subject, from the anthropic view of the cosmos to the rights and wrongs of jaywalking, he jubilantly and apodictically gives over the radio and in his newspaper columns. We assume his probity. Yet for $25 (or whatever) you can get His Honor to recite whatever words you write about whatever product.

And of course it isn't only he. The entire radio-talk world does it, Rush Limbaugh, Don Imus, Paul Harvey, Ollie North. And the advertisers acknowledge the added value of the commercial personally spoken by the man at the microphone. The premium differs, but we are talking about maybe 150 per cent of what Nike footwear would pay if the ad were read out by a mere announcer. So once again, if we are mad at Brinkley, why aren't we mad at every other celebrity who trades on his prestige in one world to advance the fortunes of a product in another world?

3. I was so bold as to announce in this space, a dozen years ago, that it is wrong to opportunize on personal celebrity to recommend products. At the time I mentioned four outstanding virgins, as I called them—men who had never consented to act as product-sponsors. It happened that all four were personal friends. But then, one by one, they went over. Laurence Olivier, David Niven, James Stewart, Charlton Heston. Now, do you know what happened to me when I saw that parade file by?

What happened is: I changed my mind. I reasoned, as the logicians say, *a posteriori*. That works this way: If you have every reason to know that 1) David Niven is a salt-of-the-earth true-blue gentleman, and he nevertheless ends up 2) agreeing to sponsor a Japanese deodorant, then you reason that people who do 2) can nevertheless continue to be 1).

Which prompts me to confess that I asked Charlton Heston during the virginal interval above to do me the favor of advertising NATIONAL REVIEW in a television commercial. He agreed! And the one-minute ad began with a picture of him, tall, rangy, muscular, warm. Text: "I'm about to do something I've never done before. I'm here to ask you to patronize a particular product . . ." And then the encomium. I went on to exhilarating recklessness, appending to the Heston ad a 15-second sequence of President Reagan, taken at a celebratory banquet, endorsing the same magazine. Pop!—a letter from somebody or another in the White House: "The President cannot be used to advertise any product . . ." etc. What to do?

Nothing! Just ignore the little man in the White House, confident that the Big Man was on your side.

So then, until the day comes when I read that David Brinkley has taken a gun and shot Jesse Helms, put me down as believing that he is a fine and honorable gentleman no matter what he says about Archer Daniels Midland. □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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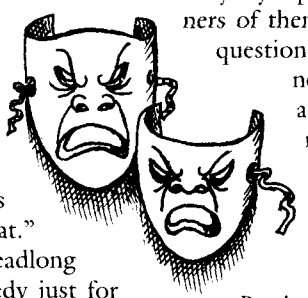
THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

FLORENCE KING

I WISH it were 1959 again. Not for the creamy complexion and svelte figure I had then, but because it was the last year of my pre-Kennedy life, before I had ever heard of them.

Nobody I knew had ever heard of them. Old Joe's stormy prewar ambassadorship rang a faint bell with my parents but they didn't make the connection until the 1960 campaign. Ethnic Northerners remembered JFK with pride from the Veepstakes of 1956, but we were not, to put it mildly, ethnic Northerners. We didn't even know he was Irish; my English father thought of the name as Scottish thanks to an old British military march called "Sir Alexander Kennedy." As for my mother, she didn't even know about Boston. The first time she heard JFK's voice she said, "He's got guts to go into politics with a speech defect like that."



O Time, cease in your headlong flight, make me pre-Kennedy just for tonight! Those were the days. Golden days, before America got moving again. Palmy days, when the tough went back to bed when the going got tough. Halcyon days, when getting mad trumped getting even. Salad days, when no adult had more than 32 teeth. Bliss it was to be alive when Camelot meant Tennyson, compound meant syntax, tragedy meant Oedipus, and curse meant time-of-the-month.

Some will say the Roosevelts were just as bad, but I was around then, too, and I disagree. Unlike Joe Kennedy, FDR did not shove his children down our throats. On the contrary, he downplayed them, did little to grease their paths, and seemed unperturbed by the mounting evidence that they would not amount to much.

Americans subconsciously picked up on his detachment and reflected it in our own attitudes toward his children. We learned their upper-class nicknames and kept up with their traffic tickets, divorces, and madcap entrepreneurial schemes, but we did not idealize them. We never thought of them as a "dynasty," not even when Franklin Jr. won what turned out to be a single term in Congress, and the idea of one Roosevelt scion picking up the torch dropped by another would have inspired a sheaf of jokes with Elliott as the punch line (he used it as collateral to start the Dropped Torch Dude Ranch, etc.). As objects of obsession the Roosevelts were, as usual, not up to snuff, and we knew it.

It might be argued that some Kennedy-style push would have made winners of them, but this skirts the larger question of the assault the Kennedys mounted on America's accepted definition of greatness and achievement.

In his introduction to *The Education of Henry Adams*, James Truslow Adams wrote:

> By the time the line reached Henry, the accumulated weight of great abilities and great offices had become crushing in a democracy. In no other American family, and in few anywhere, have ability and service been so conspicuous generation after generation without a break. In an aristocracy such a family would have been given a title, and have become a continuing entity as a family in the political and social life of the country. In a democracy there could be no such scaffolding built. The members of each generation would have to stand or fall by their own abilities . . .

In other words, merit and merit alone is the American way of greatness. FDR accepted it when he let his children sink or swim, and we the public accepted it when we declined to make a fetish of them.

By contrast, Joe Kennedy rejected it and built a privileged scaffolding for his sons, instilling in them an appreciation for the ancient perquisites of primogeniture, *carte blanche*, *noblesse oblige*, *le roi le veult*, *l'état c'est moi*, and—the Kennedy favorite—*droit du seigneur*.

The privileged scaffolding is now occupied by the third generation, wearers of the Order of Celebrity, a media knighthood whose motto, "Famous for Being Famous," was painted over with "Public Service" as needed. Whenever a Kennedy 3 was hit by scandal, the claque industry trotted out the whole thundering herd of human-rights activists and makers of documentary "films" to prove that the torch was still being passed, but the strain was evident. Kennedy 3 was top-heavy with gilded losers; running a charity oil company and founding a university in Angola sounded like something Elliott Roosevelt would do. The claque needed a punchier explanation for our endless Kennedy worship, and Michael Kennedy gave them one on New Year's Eve.

THE explanation would intrigue James Truslow Adams, whose family had the opposite problem in later generations. Analyzing why America *stopped* worshiping Adamses, he wrote: "They had little respect for the mind or opinions of the common man. They always got their own light from their own guiding stars and not from the will-o'-the-wisps of the marsh of 'public opinion.'"

The Adamses thrived in an early America of limited suffrage when the remnants of Old World hierarchy were still in place, but as egalitarianism took root their aloof personalities, their introverted habits, and their general "differentness" sank them like a stone. "A certain failure had become noticeable by the time of Henry's father, [who] had not become President . . . the failure in adjustment to environment had begun."

Michael Kennedy's death made pundits think hard about environmental adjustment. *Newsweek*'s Jonathan Alter was rendered breathless by the Kennedy genius for it. The clan is "a mirror of America," "a metaphor for the American Century"; they have an "uncanny connection to the times," each generation has "absorbed the Zeitgeist," and Michael's death is "entirely in context."

In context of what? "If judged by its tabloid throw-weight, the dynasty is alive and well and yielding the racy and heart-wrenching stories so in tune with the times."

It's come to this. We not only identify with a man who died doing what Daffy Duck did in a thousand cartoons, but we call it a tragedy and blame it on a curse.

Kennedys 'R' Us, Adamses 'R'nt. □

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

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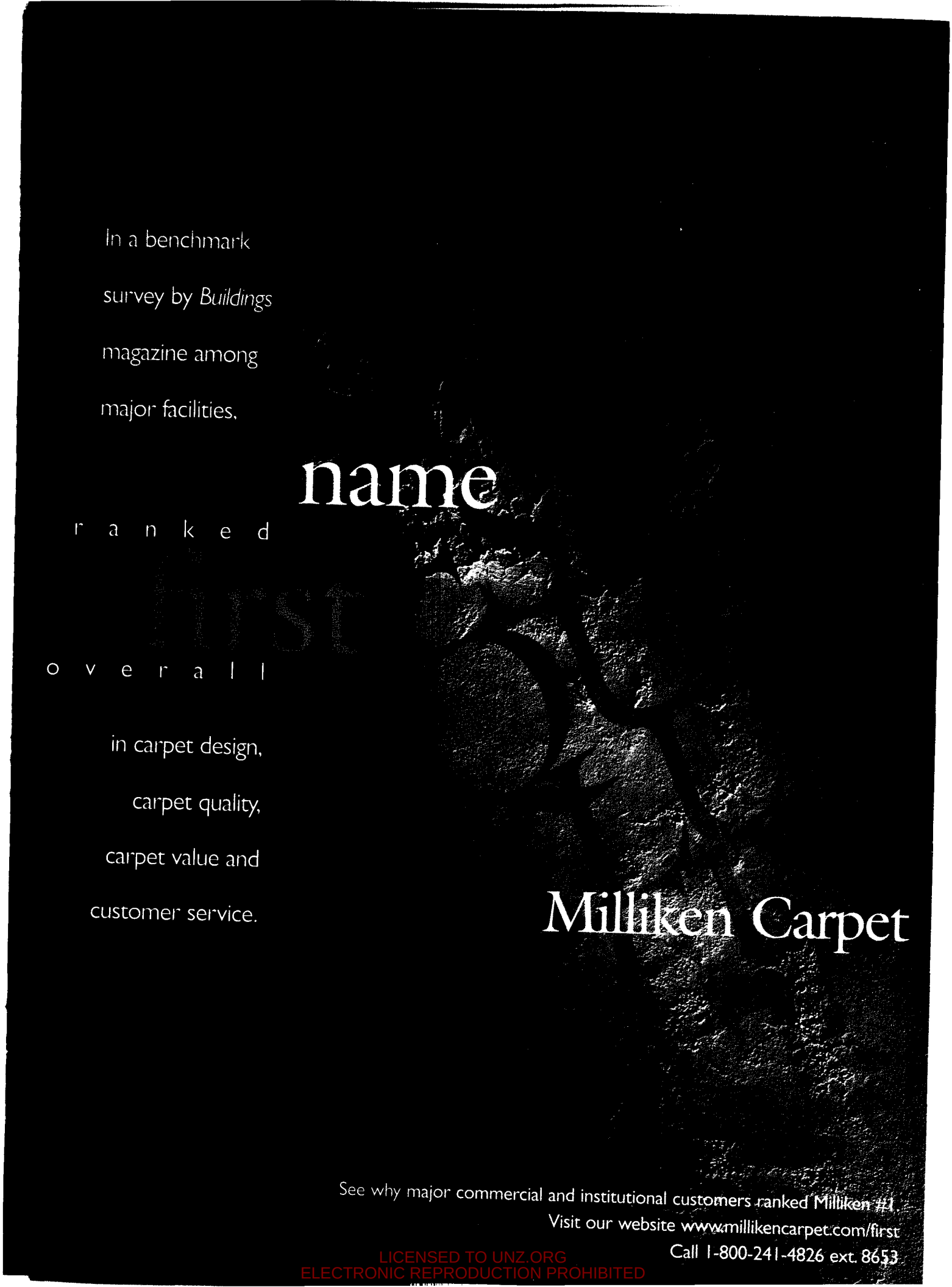
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